THE following Form of Prayer, which Dr Swift constantly used in the pulpit before his sermon, is copied from his own handwriting:

"Almighty and most merciful God! forgive us all our sins. Give us grace heartily to repent them, and to lead new lives. Graft in our hearts a true love and veneration for thy holy name and word. Make thy pastors burning and shining lights, able to convince gainsayers, and to save others and themselves. Bless this congregation here met together in thy name; grant them to hear and receive thy holy word, to the salvation of their own souls. Lastly, we desire to return thee praise and thanksgiving for all thy mercies bestowed upon us; but chiefly for the Fountain of them all, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name and words we further call upon thee, saying, 'Our Father,' &c."

NOTE.

THESE twelve sermons are what have been handed down to us of a bundle of thirty-five which Swift, some years before his death, gave to Dr. Sheridan. Swift had no great opinion of them himself, if we may judge from what he said to his friend when he offered him the bundle. "You may have them if you please; they may be of use to you, they never were of any to me." There is not much in any of them of that quality which characterizes the average sermon. For the artifices of rhetoric which are usually employed to move hearers Swift had no small contempt. He aimed to convince the mind by plain statements of common-sense views. He had no faith in a conviction brought about under the stress of emotional excitement. His sermons exactly answer to the advice he gave a young clergyman—"First tell the people what is their duty, and then convince them that it is so." In the note to his reprint of these sermons Sir Walter Scott has very admirably summed up their qualities.

"The Sermons of Swift," says Scott, "have none of that thunder which appals, or that resistless and winning softness which melts, the hearts of an audience. He can never have enjoyed the triumph of uniting hundreds in one ardent sentiment of love, of terror, or of devotion. His reasoning, however powerful, and indeed unanswerable, convinces the understanding, but is never addressed to the heart; and, indeed, from his instructions to a young clergyman, he seems hardly to have considered pathos as a legitimate ingredient in an English sermon. Occasionally, too, Swift's misanthropic habits break out even from the pulpit; nor is he altogether able to suppress his disdain of those fellow mortals, on whose behalf was accomplished the great work of redemption. With such unamiable feelings towards his hearers, the preacher might indeed command their respect, but could never excite their sympathy. It may be feared that his Sermons were less popular from another cause, imputable more to the congregation than to the pastor. Swift spared not the vices of rich or poor; and, disdaining to amuse the imaginations of his audience with discussion of dark points of divinity, or warm them by a flow of sentimental devotion, he rushes at once to the point of moral depravity, and upbraids them with their favourite and predominant vices in a tone of stern reproof, bordering upon reproach. In short, he tears the bandages from their wounds, like the hasty surgeon of a crowded hospital, and applies the incision knife and caustic with salutary, but rough and untamed severity. But, alas! the mind must be already victorious over the worst of its evil propensities, that can profit by this harsh medicine. There is a principle of opposition in our nature, which mans itself with obstinacy even against avowed truth, when it approaches our feelings in a harsh and insulting manner. And Swift was probably sensible, that his discourses, owing

to these various causes, did not produce the powerful effects most grateful to the feelings of the preacher, because they reflect back to him those of the audience.

"But although the Sermons of Swift are deficient in eloquence, and were lightly esteemed by their author, they must not be undervalued by the modern reader. They exhibit, in an eminent degree, that powerful grasp of intellect which distinguished the author above all his contemporaries. In no religious discourses can be found more sound good sense, more happy and forcible views of the immediate subject. The reasoning is not only irresistible, but managed in a mode so simple and clear, that its force is obvious to the most ordinary capacity. Upon all subjects of morality, the preacher maintains the character of a rigid and inflexible monitor; neither admitting apology for that which is wrong, nor softening the difficulty of adhering to that which is right; a stern stoicism of doctrine, that may fail in finding many converts, but leads to excellence in the few manly minds who dare to embrace it.

"In treating the doctrinal points of belief, (as in his Sermon upon the Trinity,) Swift systematically refuses to quit the high and pre-eminent ground which the defender of Christianity is entitled to occupy, or to submit to the test of human reason, mysteries which are placed, by their very nature, far beyond our finite capacities. Swift considered, that, in religion, as in profane science, there must be certain ultimate laws which are to be received as fundamental truths, although we are incapable of defining or analysing their nature; and he censures those divines, who, in presumptuous confidence of their own logical powers, enter into controversy upon such mysteries of faith, without considering that they give thereby the most undue advantage to the infidel. Our author wisely and consistently declared reason an incompetent judge of doctrines, of which God had declared the fact, concealing from man the manner. He contended, that he who, upon the whole, receives the Christian religion as of divine inspiration, must be contented to depend upon God's truth, and his holy word, and receive with humble faith the mysteries which are too high for comprehension. Above all, Swift points out, with his usual forcible precision, the mischievous tendency of those investigations which, while they assail one fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, shake and endanger the whole fabric, destroy the settled faith of thousands, pervert and mislead the genius of the learned and acute, destroy and confound the religious principles of the simple and ignorant."

In 1744, Faulkner printed three sermons as a single volume; these were "On Mutual Subjection," "On Conscience," and "On the Trinity." The other sermons appeared in the various editions issued by Nichols and others. The text here given is that of the volume of 1744, of Hawkesworth and Scott.

[T. S.]

ON MUTUAL SUBJECTION.

1 PETER, V. 5.

"—— Yea, all of you be subject one to another."

THE Apostle having in many parts of this epistle given directions to Christians concerning the duty of subjection or obedience to superiors; in the several instances of the subject to his prince, the child to his parent, the servant to his master, the wife to her husband, and the younger to the elder; doth here, in the words of my text, sum up the whole, by advancing a point of doctrine, which at first may appear a little extraordinary: "Yea, all of you," saith he, "be subject one to another." For it should seem, that two persons cannot properly be said to be subject to each other, and that subjection is only due from inferiors to those above them: yet St Paul hath several passages to the same purpose. For he exhorts the Romans, "in honour to prefer one another;"[1] and the Philippians, "that in lowliness of mind they should each esteem other better than themselves;"[2] and the Ephesians, "that they should submit themselves one to another in the fear of the Lord."[3] Here we find these two great apostles recommending to all Christians this duty of mutual subjection. For we may observe by St Peter, that having mentioned the several relations which men bear to each other, as governor and subject, master and servant, and the rest which I have already repeated, he maketh no exception, but sums up the whole with commanding "all to be subject one to another." From whence we may conclude, that this subjection due from all men to all men, is something more than the compliment of course, when our betters

[1] Rom. xii. 10. [2] Philip. ii. 3. [3] Ephes. v. 21.

are pleased to tell us they are our humble servants, but understand us to be their slaves.

I know very well, that some of those who explain this text, apply it to humility, to the duties of charity, to private exhortations, and to bearing with each other's infirmities: And it is probable, the apostle may have had a regard to all these: But however, many learned men agree, that there is something more understood, and so the words in their plain natural meaning must import; as you will observe yourselves, if you read them with the beginning of the verse, which is thus: "Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another." So, that upon the whole, there must be some kind of subjection due from every man to every man, which cannot be made void by any power, pre-eminence, or authority whatsoever. Now, what sort of subjection this is, and how it ought to be paid, shall be the subject of my present discourse.

As God hath contrived all the works of nature to be useful, and in some manner a support to each other, by which the whole frame of the world under his providence is preserved and kept up; so, among mankind, our particular stations are appointed to each of us by God Almighty, wherein we are obliged to act, as far as our power reacheth, toward the good of the whole community. And he who doth not perform that part assigned him, toward advancing the benefit of the whole, in proportion to his opportunities and abilities, is not only a useless, but a very mischievous member of the public: Because he taketh his share of the profit, and yet leaves his share of the burden to be borne by others, which is the true principal cause of most miseries and misfortunes in life. For, a wise man who doth not assist with his counsels, a great man with his protection, a rich man with his bounty and charity, and a poor man with his labour, are perfect nuisances in a commonwealth. Neither is any condition of life more honourable in the sight of God than another; otherwise he would be a respecter of persons, which he assureth us he is not: For he hath proposed the same salvation to all men, and hath only placed them in different ways or stations to work it out. Princes are born with no more advantages of strength or wisdom than other men; and, by an unhappy education, are usually more

defective in both than thousands of their subjects. They depend for every necessary of life upon the meanest of their people: Besides, obedience and subjection were never enjoined by God to humour the passions, lusts, and vanities of those who demand them from us; but we are commanded to obey our governors, because disobedience would breed seditions in the state. Thus servants are directed to obey their masters, children their parents, and wives their husbands; not from any respect of persons in God, but because otherwise there would be nothing but confusion in private families. This matter will be clearly explained, by considering the comparison which St Paul maketh between the Church of Christ and the body of man: For the same resemblance will hold, not only to families and kingdoms, but to the whole corporation of mankind. "The eye," saith he,[1] "cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee. Nay, much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." The case is directly the same among mankind. The prince cannot say to the merchant, I have no need of thee; nor the merchant to the labourer, I have no need of thee. Nay, much more those members, &c. For the poor are generally more necessary members of the commonwealth than the rich: Which clearly shews, that God never intented such possessions for the sake and service of those to whom he lends them: but because he hath assigned every man his particular station to be useful in life; and this for the reason given by the apostle, "that there should be no schism in the body."[2]

From hence may partly be gathered the nature of that subjection which we all owe to one another. God Almighty hath been pleased to put us into an imperfect state, where we have perpetual occasion of each other's assistance. There is none so low, as not to be in a capacity of assisting the highest; nor so high, as not to want the assistance of the lowest.

It plainly appears from what hath been said, that no one

[1] 1 Corin. xii. 21, 23, 26. [2] 1 Corin. xii. 25.

human creature is more worthy than another in the sight of God; farther, than according to the goodness or holiness of their lives; and, that power, wealth, and the like outward advantages, are so far from being the marks of God's approving or preferring those on whom they are bestowed, that, on the contrary, he is pleased to suffer them to be almost engrossed by those who have least title to his favour. Now, according to this equality wherein God hath placed all mankind, with relation himself, you will observe, that in all the relations between man and man, there is a mutual dependence, whereby the one cannot subsist without the other. Thus, no man can be a prince without subjects, nor a master without servants, nor a father without children. And this both explains and confirms the doctrine of the text: For, where there is a mutual dependence, there must be a mutual duty, and consequently a mutual subjection. For instance, the subject must only obey his prince, because God commands it, human laws require it, and the safety of the public maketh it necessary: (For the same reasons we must obey all that are in authority, and submit ourselves, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, whether they rule according to our liking or no.) On the other side, in those countries that pretend to freedom, princes are subject to those laws which their people have chosen; they are bound to protect their subjects in liberty, property, and religion; to receive their petitions, and redress their grievances: So, that the best prince is, in the opinion of wise men, only the greatest servant of the nation; not only a servant to the public in general, but in some sort to every man in it. In the like manner, a servant owes obedience, and diligence and faithfulness to his master, from whom, at the same time, he hath a just demand for protection, and maintenance, and gentle treatment. Nay, even the poor beggar hath a just demand of an alms from the rich man, who is guilty of fraud, injustice, and oppression, if he doth not afford relief according to his abilities.

But this subjection we all owe one another is nowhere more necessary than in the common conversations of life; for without it there could be no society among men. If the learned would not sometimes submit to the ignorant, the wise to the simple, the gentle to the froward, the old to

the weaknesses of the young, there would be nothing but everlasting variance in the world. This our Saviour himself confirmed by his own example; for he appeared in the form of a servant, and washed his disciples' feet, adding those memorable words: "Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master wash your feet, how much more ought ye to wash one another's feet?" Under which expression of washing the feet, is included all that subjection, assistance, love, and duty, which every good Christian ought to pay his brother, in whatever station God hath placed him. For the greatest prince and the meanest slave, are not, by infinite degrees so distant, as our Saviour and those disciples whose feet he vouchsafed to wash.

And, although this doctrine of subjecting ourselves to one another may seem to grate upon the pride and vanity of mankind, and may therefore be hard to be digested by those who value themselves upon their greatness or their wealth; yet, it is really no more than what most men practise upon other occasions. For, if our neighbour who is our inferior comes to see us, we rise to receive him, we place him above us, and respect him as if he were better than ourselves; and this is thought both decent and necessary, and is usually called good manners. Now the duty required by the apostle, is only that we should enlarge our minds, and that what we thus practice in the common course of life, we should imitate in all our actions and proceedings whatsoever; since our Saviour tells us, that every man is our neighbour, and since we are so ready in the point of civility, to yield to others in our own houses, where only we have any title to govern.

Having thus shewn you what sort of subjection it is which all men owe one to another, and in what manner it ought to be paid, I shall now draw some observations from what hath been said.

And *first:* A thorough practice of this duty of subjecting ourselves to the wants and infirmities of each other, would utterly extinguish in us the vice of pride. For, if God hath pleased to entrust me with a talent, not for my own sake, but for the service of others, and at the same time hath left me full of wants and necessities which others must

supply; I can then have no cause to set any extraordinary value upon myself, or to despise my brother, because he hath not the same talents which were lent to me. His being may probably be as useful to the public as mine; and, therefore, by the rules of right reason, I am in no sort preferable to him.

Secondly: It is very manifest, from what hath been said, that no man ought to look upon the advantages of life, such as riches, honour, power, and the like, as his property, but merely as a trust, which God hath deposited with him, to be employed for the use of his brethren; and God will certainly punish the breach of that trust, although the laws of man will not, or rather indeed cannot; because the trust was conferred only by God, who hath not left it to any power on earth to decide infallibly whether a man maketh a good use of his talents or no, or to punish him where he fails. And therefore God seems to have more particularly taken this matter into his own hands, and will most certainly reward or punish us in proportion to our good or ill performance in it. Now, although the advantages which one man possesseth more than another, may in some sense be called his property with respect to other men, yet with respect to God they are, as I said, only a trust: which will plainly appear from hence. If a man doth not use those advantages to the good of the public, or the benefit of his neighbour, it is certain he doth not deserve them; and consequently, that God never intended them for a blessing to him; and on the other side, whoever doth employ his talents as he ought, will find by his own experience, that they were chiefly lent him for the service of others: for to the service of others he will certainly employ them.

Thirdly: If we could all be brought to practise this duty of subjecting ourselves to each other, it would very much contribute to the general happiness of mankind: for this would root out envy and malice from the heart of man; because you cannot envy your neighbour's strength, if he maketh use of it to defend your life, or carry your burden; you cannot envy his wisdom, if he gives you good counsel; nor his riches, if he supplieth you in your wants; nor his greatness, if he employs it to your protection. The miseries of life are not properly owing to the unequal distribution of

things; but God Almighty, the great King of Heaven, is treated like the kings of the earth; who, although perhaps intending well themselves, have often most abominable ministers and stewards; and those generally the vilest, to whom they entrust the most talents. But here is the difference, that the princes of this world see by other men's eyes, but God sees all things; and therefore whenever he permits his blessings to be dealt among those who are unworthy, we may certainly conclude that he intends them only as a punishment to an evil world, as well as to the owners. It were well, if those would consider this, whose riches serve them only as a spur to avarice, or as an instrument to their lusts; whose wisdom is only of this world, to put false colours upon things, to call good evil, and evil good, against the conviction of their own consciences; and lastly, who employ their power and favour in acts of oppression or injustice, in misrepresenting persons and things, or in countenancing the wicked to the ruin of the innocent.

Fourthly: The practice of this duty of being subject to one another, would make us rest contented in the several stations of life wherein God hath thought fit to place us; because it would in the best and easiest manner bring us back as it were to that early state of the Gospel when Christians had all things in common. For, if the poor found the rich disposed to supply their wants; if the ignorant found the wise ready to instruct and direct them; or if the weak might always find protection from the mighty; they could none of them with the least pretence of justice lament their own condition.

From all that hath been hitherto said, it appears, that great abilities of any sort, when they are employed as God directs, do but make the owners of them greater and more painful servants to their neighbour, and the public; however, we are by no means to conclude from hence, that they are not really blessings, when they are in the hands of good men. For first, what can be a greater honour than to be chosen one of the stewards and dispensers of God's bounty to mankind? What is there, that can give a generous spirit more pleasure and complacency of mind, than to consider that he is an instrument of doing much good? that great numbers owe to him, under God, their subsistence, their

safety, their health, and the good conduct of their lives? The wickedest man upon earth taketh a pleasure in doing good to those he loveth; and therefore surely a good Christian, who obeys our Saviour's command of loving all men, cannot but take delight in doing good even to his enemies. God, who giveth all things to all men, can receive nothing from any; and those among men, who do the most good, and receive the fewest returns, do most resemble their Creator: for which reason, St Paul delivereth it as a saying of our Saviour, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." By this rule, what must become of those things which the world valueth as the greatest blessings, riches, power, and the like, when our Saviour plainly determines, that the best way to make them blessings, is to part with them? Therefore, although the advantages which one man hath over another, may be called blessings, yet they are by no means so in the sense the world usually understands. Thus, for example, great riches are no blessing in themselves; because the poor man, with the common necessaries of life enjoys more health, and hath fewer cares without them: How then do they become blessings? No otherwise, than by being employed in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, rewarding worthy men, and in short, doing acts of charity and generosity. Thus likewise, power is no blessing in itself, because private men bear less envy, and trouble, and anguish without it. But when it is employed to protect the innocent, to relieve the oppressed, and to punish the oppressor, then it becomes a great blessing. And so lastly even great wisdom is in the opinion of Solomon not a blessing in itself: For "in much wisdom is much sorrow;" and men of common understandings, if they serve God and mind their callings, make fewer mistakes in the conduct of life than those who have better heads. And yet, wisdom is a mighty blessing, when it is applied to good purposes, to instruct the ignorant, to be a faithful counsellor either in public or private, to be a director to youth, and to many other ends needless here to mention.

To conclude: God sent us into the world to obey his commands, by doing as much good as our abilities will reach, and as little evil as our many infirmities will permit. Some he hath only trusted with one talent, some with five,

and some with ten. No man is without his talent; and he that is faithful or negligent in a little, shall be rewarded or punished, as well as he that hath been so in a great deal.

Consider what hath been said; and the Lord give you a right understanding in all things. To whom with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever.

ON THE

TESTIMONY OF CONSCIENCE.

2 CORINTHIANS, I. 12. PART OF IT.

"—— For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience."

THERE is no word more frequently in the mouths of men, than that of conscience, and the meaning of it is in some measure generally understood: However, because it is likewise a word extremely abused by many people, who apply other meanings to it, which God Almighty never intended; I shall explain it to you in the clearest manner I am able. The word conscience properly signifies, that knowledge which a man hath within himself of his own thoughts and actions. And, because, if a man judgeth fairly of his own actions by comparing them with the law of God, his mind will either approve or condemn him according as he hath done good or evil; therefore this knowledge or conscience may properly be called both an accuser and a judge. So that whenever our conscience accuseth us, we are certainly guilty; but we are not always innocent when it doth not accuse us: For very often, through the hardness of our hearts, or the fondness and favour we bear to ourselves, or through ignorance or neglect, we do not suffer our conscience to take any cognizance of several sins we commit. There is another office likewise belonging to conscience, which is that of being our director and guide; and the wrong use of this hath been the occasion of more evils under the sun, than almost all other causes put together. For, as conscience is nothing else but the knowledge we have of what we are thinking and doing; so it can guide us no farther than that knowledge reacheth. And therefore God

hath placed conscience in us to be our director only in those actions which Scripture and reason plainly tell us to be good or evil. But in cases too difficult or doubtful for us to comprehend or determine, there conscience is not concerned; because it cannot advise in what it doth not understand, nor decide where it is itself in doubt: but, by God's great mercy, those difficult points are never of absolute necessity to our salvation. There is likewise another evil, that men often say, a thing is against their conscience, when really it is not. For instance: Ask any of those who differ from the worship established, why they do not come to church? They will say, they dislike the ceremonies, the prayers, the habits, and the like, and therefore it goes against their conscience: But they are mistaken, their teacher hath put those words into their mouths; for a man's conscience can go no higher than his knowledge; and therefore until he has thoroughly examined by Scripture, and the practice of the ancient church, whether those points are blameable or no, his conscience cannot possibly direct him to condemn them. Hence have likewise arisen those mistakes about what is usually called "Liberty of Conscience"; which, properly speaking, is no more than a liberty of knowing our own thoughts; which liberty no one can take from us. But those words have obtained quite different meanings: Liberty of conscience is now-a-days not only understood to be the liberty of believing what men please, but also of endeavouring to propagate the belief as much as they can, and to overthrow the faith which the laws have already established, to be rewarded by the public for those wicked endeavours: And this is the liberty of conscience which the fanatics are now openly in the face of the world endeavouring at with their utmost application. At the same time it cannot but be observed, that those very persons, who under pretence of a public spirit and tenderness towards their Christian brethren, are so zealous for such a liberty of conscience as this, are of all others the least tender to those who differ from them in the smallest point relating to government; and I wish I could not say, that the Majesty of the living God may be offended with more security than the memory of a dead prince. But the wisdom of the world at present seems to agree with that of the heathen Emperor, who said, if the

gods were offended, it was their own concern, and they were able to vindicate themselves.[1]

But although conscience hath been abused to those wicked purposes which I have already related, yet a due regard to the directions it plainly giveth us, as well as to itsaccusations, reproaches, and advices, would be of the greatest use to mankind, both for their present welfare and future happiness.

Therefore, my discourse at this time shall be directed to prove to you, that there is no solid, firm foundation for virtue, but on a conscience which is guided by religion.

In order to this, I shall first shew you the weakness and uncertainty of two false principles, which many people set up in the place of conscience, for a guide to their actions.

The first of these principles is, what the world usually calls *Moral Honesty*. There are some people, who appear very indifferent as to religion, and yet have the repute of being just and fair in their dealings; and these are generally known by the character of good moral men. But now, if you look into the grounds and the motives of such a man's actions, you shall find them to be no other than his own ease and interest. For example: You trust a moral man with your money in the way of trade; you trust another with the defence of your cause at law, and perhaps they both deal justly with you. Why? Not from any regard they have for justice, but because their fortune depends upon their credit, and a stain of open public dishonesty must be to their disadvantage. But let it consist with such a man's interest and safety to wrong you, and then it will be impossible you can have any hold upon him; because there is nothing left to give him a check, or put in the balance against his profit. For, if he hath nothing to govern himself by, but the opinion of the world, as long as he can conceal his injustice from the world, he thinks he is safe.

Besides, it is found by experience, that those men who set up for morality without regard to religion, are generally but virtuous in part; they will be just in their dealings between man and man; but if they find themselves disposed to pride, lust, intemperance, or avarice, they do not think their

[1] The saying of Tiberius as given by Tacitus ("Annals," bk. i., c. lxxiii.), *Deorum offensa diis curæ*. [T. S.]

morality concerned to check them in any of these vices, because it is the great rule of such men, that they may lawfully follow the dictates of nature, wherever their safety, health, and fortune, are not injured. So, that upon the whole, there is hardly one vice which a mere moral man may not upon some occasions allow himself to practise.

The other false principle, which some men set up in the place of conscience to be their director in life, is what those who pretend to it, call *Honour*.

This word is often made the sanction of an oath; it is reckoned a great commendation to be a man of strict honour; and it is commonly understood, that a man of honour can never be guilty of a base action. This is usually the style of military men; of persons with titles; and of others who pretend to birth and quality. It is true, indeed, that in ancient times it was universally understood, that honour was the reward of virtue; but if such honour as is now-a-days going will not permit a man to do a base action, it must be allowed, there are very few such things as base actions in nature. No man of honour, as that word is usually understood, did ever pretend that his honour obliged him to be chaste or temperate; to pay his creditors; to be useful to his country; to do good to mankind; to endeavour to be wise, or learned; to regard his word, his promise, or his oath; or if he hath any of these virtues, they were never learned in the catechism of honour; which contains but two precepts, the punctual payment of debts contracted at play, and the right understanding the several degrees of an affront, in order to revenge it by the death of an adversary.

But suppose, this principle of honour, which some men so much boast of, did really produce more virtues than it ever pretended to; yet since the very being of that honour dependeth upon the breath, the opinion, or the fancy of the people, the virtues derived from it could be of no long or certain duration. For example: Suppose a man from a principle of honour should resolve to be just, or chaste, or temperate; and yet the censuring world should take a humour of refusing him those characters; he would then think the obligation at an end. Or, on the other side, if he thought he could gain honour by the falsest and vilest action, (which is a case that very often happens,) he would then

make no scruple to perform it. And God knows, it would be an unhappy state, to have the religion, the liberty, or the property of a people lodged in such hands, which however hath been too often the case.

What I have said upon this principle of honour may perhaps be thought of small concernment to most of you who are my hearers: However, a caution was not altogether unnecessary; since there is nothing by which not only the vulgar, but the honest tradesman hath been so much deceived, as this infamous pretence to honour in too many of their betters.

Having thus shewn you the weakness and uncertainty of those principles which some men set up in the place of conscience to direct them in their actions, I shall now endeavour to prove to you that there is no solid, firm foundation of virtue, but in a conscience directed by the principles of religion.

There is no way of judging how far we may depend upon the actions of men, otherwise than by knowing the motives, and grounds, and causes of them; and, if the motives of our actions be not resolved and determined into the law of God, they will be precarious and uncertain, and liable to perpetual changes. I will shew you what I mean, by an example: Suppose a man thinks it his duty to obey his parents, because reason tells him so, because he is obliged by gratitude, and because the laws of his country command him to do so; but, if he stops here, his parents can have no lasting security; for an occasion may happen, wherein it may be extremely his interest to be disobedient, and where the laws of the land can lay no hold upon him: therefore, before such a man can safely be trusted, he must proceed farther, and consider, that his reason is the gift of God; that God commanded him to be obedient to the laws, and did moreover in a particular manner enjoin him to be dutiful to his parents; after which, if he lays due weight upon those considerations, he will probably continue in his duty to the end of his life: Because no earthly interest can ever come in competition to balance the danger of offending his Creator, or the happiness of pleasing him. And of all this his conscience will certainly inform him, if he hath any regard to religion.

Secondly: Fear and hope are the two greatest natural motives of all men's actions: But, neither of these passions

will ever put us in the way of virtue, unless they be directed by conscience. For although virtuous men do sometimes accidentally make their way to preferment, yet the world is so corrupted, that no man can reasonably hope to be rewarded in it, merely upon account of his virtue. And consequently, the fear of punishment in this life will preserve men from very few vices, since some of the blackest and basest do often prove the surest steps to favour; such as ingratitude, hypocrisy, treachery, malice, subornation, atheism, and many more which human laws do little concern themselves about. But when conscience placeth before us the hopes of everlasting happiness, and the fears of everlasting misery, as the reward and punishment of our good or evil actions, our reason can find no way to avoid the force of such an argument, otherwise than by running into infidelity.

Lastly: Conscience will direct us to love God, and to put our whole trust and confidence in him. Our love of God will inspire us with a detestation for sin, as what is of all things most contrary to his divine nature; and if we have an entire confidence in him, *that* will enable us to subdue and despise all the allurements of the world.

It may here be objected, if conscience be so sure a director to us Christians in the conduct of our lives, how comes it to pass, that the ancient heathens, who had no other lights but those of nature and reason, should so far exceed us in all manner of virtue, as plainly appears by many examples they have left on record?

To which it may be answered; first, those heathens were extremely strict and exact in the education of their children; whereas among us this care is so much laid aside, that the more God hath blessed any man with estate or quality, just so much the less in proportion is the care he taketh in the education of his children, and particularly of that child which is to inherit his fortune: Of which the effects are visible enough among the great ones of the world. Again, those heathens did in a particular manner instil the principle into their children, of loving their country; which is so far otherwise now-a-days, that, of the several parties among us, there is none of them that seems to have so much as heard, whether there be such a virtue in the world; as plainly appears by their practices, and especially when they are placed in those

stations where they can only have opportunity of shewing it. Lastly; the most considerable among the heathens did generally believe rewards and punishments in a life to come; which is the great principle for conscience to work upon: Whereas too many of those who would be thought the most considerable among us, do, both by their practices and their discourses, plainly affirm, that they believe nothing at all of the matter.

Wherefore, since it hath manifestly appeared that a religious conscience is the only true solid foundation upon which virtue can be built, give me leave, before I conclude, to let you see how necessary such a conscience is, to conduct us in every station and condition of our lives.

That a religious conscience is necessary in any station, is confessed even by those who tell us, that all religion was invented by cunning men, in order to keep the world in awe. For, if religion, by the confession of its adversaries, be necessary towards the well-governing of mankind; then every wise man in power will be sure not only to choose out for every station under him such persons as are most likely to be kept in awe by religion, but likewise to carry some appearance of it himself, or else he is a very weak politician. And accordingly in any country where great persons affect to be open despisers of religion, their counsels will be found at last to be fully as destructive to the state as to the church.

It was the advice of Jethro to his son-in-law Moses, to "provide able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness," and to place such over the people; and Moses, who was as wise a statesman, at least, as any in this age, thought fit to follow that advice. Great abilities, without the fear of God, are most dangerous instruments, when they are trusted with power. The laws of man have thought fit, that those who are called to any office of trust should be bound by an oath to the faithful discharge of it: But, an oath is an appeal to God, and therefore can have no influence except upon those who believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that seek him, and a punisher of those who disobey him: And therefore, we see, the laws themselves are forced to have recourse to conscience in these cases, because their penalties cannot reach the arts of cunning men, who can find ways to be guilty of a thousand injustices without

being discovered, or at least without being punished. And the reason why we find so many frauds, abuses, and corruptions, where any trust is conferred, can be no other, than that there is so little conscience and religion left in the world, or at least that men in their choice of instruments have private ends in view, which are very different from the service of the public. Besides, it is certain, that men who profess to have no religion, are full as zealous to bring over proselytes as any Papist or fanatic can be. And therefore, if those who are in station high enough to be of influence or example to others; if those (I say) openly profess a contempt or disbelief of religion, they will be sure to make all their dependents of their own principles; and what security can the public expect from such persons, whenever their interests, or their lusts, come into competition with their duty? It is very possible for a man who hath the appearance of religion, and is a great pretender to conscience, to be wicked and a hypocrite; but, it is impossible for a man who openly declares against religion, to give any reasonable security that he will not be false and cruel, and corrupt, whenever a temptation offers, which he values more than he does the power wherewith he was trusted. And, if such a man doth not betray his cause and his master, it is only because the temptation was not properly offered, or the profit was too small, or the danger was too great. And hence it is, that we find so little truth or justice among us, because there are so very few, who either in the service of the public, or in common dealings with each other, do ever look farther than their own advantage, and how to guard themselves against the laws of the country; which a man may do by favour, by secrecy, or by cunning, although he breaks almost every law of God.

Therefore to conclude: It plainly appears, that unless men are guided by the advice and judgment of a conscience founded on religion, they can give no security that they will be either good subjects, faithful servants of the public, or honest in their mutual dealings; since there is no other tie through which the pride, or lust, or avarice, or ambition of mankind will not certainly break one time or other.

Consider what has been said, &c.

ON THE

TRINITY.

I. EPIST. GEN. OF JOHN, V. 7.

"For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One."

THIS day being set apart to acknowledge our belief in the Eternal Trinity, I thought it might be proper to employ my present discourse entirely upon that subject; and, I hope, to handle it in such a manner, that the most ignorant among you may return home better informed of your duty in this great point, than probably you are at present.

It must be confessed, that by the weakness and indiscretion of busy (or at best, of well-meaning) people, as well as by the malice of those who are enemies to all revealed religion, and are not content to possess their own infidelity in silence, without communicating it to the disturbance of mankind; I say, by these means, it must be confessed, that the doctrine of the Trinity hath suffered very much, and made Christianity suffer along with it. For these two things must be granted: First, that men of wicked lives would be very glad there were no truth in Christianity at all; and secondly, if they can pick out any one single article in the Christian religion which appears not agreeable to their own corrupted reason, or to the arguments of those bad people, who follow the trade of seducing others, they presently conclude, that the truth of the whole Gospel must sink along with that one article; which is just as wise, as if a man should say, because he dislikes one law of his country, he

will therefore observe no law at all; and yet, that one law may be very reasonable in itself, although he does not allow it, or does not know the reason of the law-givers.

Thus it hath happened with the great doctrine of the Trinity; which word is indeed not in the Scripture, but was a term of art invented in the earlier times to express the doctrine by a single word, for the sake of brevity and convenience. The doctrine then, as delivered in Holy Scripture, although not exactly in the same words, is very short, and amounts only to this, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are each of them God, and yet there is but one God. For, as to the word Person, when we say there are three Persons; and as to those other explanations in the Athanasian Creed this day read to you (whether compiled by Athanasius or no) they were taken up three hundred years after Christ, to expound this doctrine; and I will tell you upon what occasion. About that time there sprang up a heresy of a people called Arians, from one Arius the leader of them. These denied our Saviour to be God, although they allowed all the rest of the Gospel (wherein they were more sincere than their followers among us). Thus the Christian world was divided into two parts, until at length, by the zeal and courage of St Athanasius, the Arians were condemned in a general council, and a creed formed upon the true faith, as St Athanasius hath settled it. This creed is now read at certain times in our churches, which, although it is useful for edification to those who understand it; yet, since it containeth some nice and philosophical points which few people can comprehend, the bulk of mankind is obliged to believe no more than the Scripture doctrine, as I have delivered it. Because that creed was intended only as an answer to the Arians in their own way, who were very subtle disputers.

But this heresy having revived in the world about a hundred years ago, and continued ever since; not out of a zeal to truth, but to give a loose to wickedness, by throwing off all religion; several divines, in order to answer the cavils of those adversaries to truth and morality, began to find out farther explanations of this doctrine of the Trinity, by rules of philosophy; which have multiplied controversies to such a degree, as to beget scruples that have perplexed the minds

of many sober Christians, who otherwise could never have entertained them.

I must therefore be bold to affirm, that the method taken by many of those learned men to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, hath been founded upon a mistake.

It must be allowed, that every man is bound to follow the rules and directions of that measure of reason which God hath given him; and indeed he cannot do otherwise, if he will be sincere, or act like a man. For instance: If I should be commanded by an angel from heaven to believe it is midnight at noon-day; yet I could not believe him. So, if I were directly told in Scripture that three are one, and one is three, I could not conceive or believe it in the natural common sense of that expression, but must suppose that something dark or mystical was meant, which it pleased God to conceal from me and from all the world. Thus, in the text, "There are Three that bear record," &c. Am I capable of knowing and defining what union and what distinction there may be in the divine nature, which possibly may be hid from the angels themselves? Again, I see it plainly declared in Scripture, that there is but one God; and yet I find our Saviour claiming the prerogative of God in knowing men's thoughts; in saying, "He and his Father are one;" and, "before Abraham was, I am." I read, that the disciples worshipped him; that Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God." And St John, chap. 1st, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I read likewise that the Holy Ghost bestowed the gift of tongues, and the power of working miracles; which, if rightly considered, is as great a miracle as any, that a number of illiterate men should of a sudden be qualified to speak all the languages then known in the world; such as could be done by the inspiration of God alone. From these several texts it is plain, that God commands us to believe that there is an union and there is a distinction; but what that union, or what that distinction is, all mankind are equally ignorant, and must continue so, at least till the day of judgment, without some new revelation.

But because I cannot conceive the nature of this union and distinction in the divine nature, am I therefore to reject

them as absurd and impossible; as I would, if any one told me that three men are one, and one man is three? We are told, that a man and his wife are one flesh; this I can comprehend the meaning of; yet, literally taken, it is a thing impossible. But the apostle tell us, "We see but in part, and we know but in part;" and yet we would comprehend all the secret ways and workings of God.

Therefore I shall again repeat the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is positively affirmed in Scripture: that God is there expressed in three different names, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost: that each of these is God, and that there is but one God. But this union and distinction are a mystery utterly unknown to mankind.

This is enough for any good Christian to believe on this great article, without ever inquiring any farther: And, this can be contrary to no man's reason, although the knowledge of it is hid from him.

But there is another difficulty of great importance among those who quarrel with the doctrine of the Trinity, as well as with several other articles of Christianity; which is, that our religion abounds in mysteries, and these they are so bold as to revile as cant, imposture, and priestcraft. It is impossible for us to determine for what reasons God thought fit to communicate some things to us in part, and leave some part a mystery. But so it is in fact, and so the Holy Scripture tells us in several places. For instance: the resurrection and change of our bodies are called mysteries by St Paul; and our Saviour's incarnation is another: The Kingdom of God is called a mystery by our Saviour, to be only known to his disciples; so is faith, and the word of God by St Paul. I omit many others. So, that to declare against all mysteries without distinction or exception, is to declare against the whole tenor of the New Testament.

There are two conditions that may bring a mystery under suspicion. First, when it is not taught and commanded in Holy Writ; or, secondly, when the mystery turns to the advantage of those who preach it to others. Now, as to the first, it can never be said, that we preach mysteries without warrant from Holy Scripture, although I confess this of the Trinity may have sometimes been explained by human invention, which might perhaps better have been spared. As

to the second, it will not be possible to charge the Protestant priesthood with proposing any temporal advantage to themselves by broaching or multiplying, or preaching of mysteries. Does this mystery of the Trinity, for instance, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, bring the least profit or power to the preachers? No; it is as great a mystery to themselves as it is to the meanest of their hearers; and may be rather a cause of humiliation, by putting their understanding in that point upon a level with the most ignorant of their flock. It is true indeed, the Roman church hath very much enriched herself by trading in mysteries, for which they have not the least authority from Scripture, and were fitted only to advance their own temporal wealth and grandeur; such as transubstantiation, the worshipping of images, indulgences for sins, purgatory, and masses for the dead; with many more: But, it is the perpetual talent of those who have ill-will to our Church, or a contempt for all religion, taken up by the wickedness of their lives, to charge us with the errors and corruptions of Popery, which all Protestants have thrown off near two hundred years: whereas, those mysteries held by us have no prospect of power, pomp, or wealth, but have been ever maintained by the universal body of true believers from the days of the apostles, and will be so to the resurrection; neither will the gates of hell prevail against them.

It may be thought perhaps a strange thing, that God should require us to believe mysteries, while the reason or manner of what we are to believe is above our comprehension, and wholly concealed from us: neither doth it appear at first sight, that the believing or not believing them doth concern either the glory of God, or contribute to the goodness or wickedness of our lives. But this is a great and dangerous mistake. We see what a mighty weight is laid upon faith, both in the Old and New Testament. In the former we read how the faith of Abraham is praised, who could believe that God would raise from him a great nation, at the very time that he was commanded to sacrifice his only son, and despaired of any other issue. And this was to him a great mystery. Our Saviour is perpetually preaching faith to his disciples, or reproaching them with the want of it: and St Paul produceth numerous examples of the wonders done by faith. And all this is highly reasonable: For faith

is an entire dependence upon the truth, the power, the justice, and the mercy of God; which dependence will certainly incline us to obey him in all things. So, that the great excellency of faith, consists in the consequence it hath upon our actions: as, if we depend upon the truth and wisdom of a man, we shall certainly be more disposed to follow his advice. Therefore, let no man think that he can lead as good a moral life without faith as with it; for this reason, because he who hath no faith, cannot, by the strength of his own reason or endeavours, so easily resist temptations, as the other who depends upon God's assistance in the overcoming his frailties, and is sure to be rewarded for ever in heaven for his victory over them. "Faith," says the apostle, "is the evidence of things not seen": he means, that faith is a virtue by which anything commanded us by God to believe appears evident and certain to us, although we do not see, nor can conceive it; because, by faith we entirely depend upon the truth and power of God.

It is an old and true distinction, that things may be above our reason, without being contrary to it. Of this kind are the power, the nature, and the universal presence of God, with innumerable other points. How little do those who quarrel with mysteries, know of the commonest actions of nature! The growth of an animal, of a plant, or of the smallest seed, is a mystery to the wisest among men. If an ignorant person were told that a loadstone would draw iron at a distance, he might say it was a thing contrary to his reason, and could not believe before he saw it with his eyes.

The manner whereby the soul and body are united, and how they are distinguished, is wholly unaccountable to us. We see but one part, and yet we know we consist of two; and this is a mystery we cannot comprehend, any more than that of the Trinity.

From what hath been said, it is manifest that God did never command us to believe, nor his ministers to preach, any doctrine which is contrary to the reason he hath pleased to endow us with; but for his own wise ends has thought fit to conceal from us the nature of the thing he commands; thereby to try our faith and obedience, and increase our dependence upon him.

It is highly probable, that if God should please to reveal unto us this great mystery of the Trinity, or some other mysteries in our holy religion, we should not be able to understand them, unless he would at the same time think fit to bestow on us some new powers or faculties of the mind, which we want at present, and are reserved till the day of resurrection to life eternal. "For now," as the apostle says, "we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."

Thus, we see, the matter is brought to this issue: We must either believe what God directly commands us in Holy Scripture, or we must wholly reject the Scripture, and the Christian religion which we pretend to profess. But this, I hope, is too desperate a step for any of us to make.

I have already observed, that those who preach up the belief of the Trinity, or of any other mystery, cannot propose any temporal advantage to themselves by so doing. But this is not the case of those who oppose these doctrines. Do *they* lead better moral lives than a good Christian? Are *they* more just in their dealings? more chaste, or temperate, or charitable? Nothing at all of this; but on the contrary, their intent is to overthrow all religion, that they may gratify their vices without any reproach from the world, or their own conscience: and are zealous to bring over as many others as they can to their own opinions; because it is some kind of imaginary comfort to have a multitude on their side.

There is no miracle mentioned in Holy Writ, which, if it were strictly examined, is not as much contrary to common reason, and as much a mystery, as this doctrine of the Trinity; and therefore we may, with equal justice deny the truth of them all. For instance: It is against the laws of nature, that a human body should be able to walk upon the water, as St Peter is recorded to have done; or that a dead carcass should be raised from the grave after three days, when it began to be corrupted; which those who understand anatomy will pronounce to be impossible by the common rules of nature and reason. Yet these miracles, and many others, are positively affirmed in the Gospel; and these we must believe, or give up our holy religion to atheists and infidels.

I shall now make a few inferences and observations upon what has been said.

First: It would be well, if people would not lay so much weight on their own reason in matters of religion, as to think everything impossible and absurd which they cannot conceive. How often do we contradict the right rules of reason in the whole course of our lives! Reason itself is true and just, but the reason of every particular man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed and turned by his interests, his passions, and his vices. Let any man but consider, when he hath a controversy with another, although his cause be ever so unjust, although the world be against him, how blinded he is by the love of himself, to believe that right is wrong, and wrong is right, when it maketh for his own advantage. Where is then the right use of his reason, which he so much boasts of, and which he would blasphemously set up to control the commands of the Almighty?

Secondly: When men are tempted to deny the mysteries of religion, let them examine and search into their own hearts, whether they have not some favourite sin which is of their party in this dispute, and which is equally contrary to other commands of God in the Gospel. For, why do men love darkness rather than light? The Scripture tells us, "Because their deeds are evil;" and there can be no other reason assigned. Therefore when men are curious and inquisitive to discover some weak sides in Christianity, and inclined to favour everything that is offered to its disadvantage; it is plain they wish it were not true, and those wishes can proceed from nothing but an evil conscience; because, if there be truth in our religion, their condition must be miserable.

And therefore, *Thirdly:* Men should consider, that raising difficulties concerning the mysteries in religion, cannot make them more wise, learned, or virtuous; better neighbours, or friends, or more serviceable to their country; but, whatever they pretend, will destroy their inward peace of mind, by perpetual doubts and fears arising in their breasts. And, God forbid we should ever see the times so bad, when dangerous opinions in religion will be a means to get favour and preferment; although, even in such a case, it would be

an ill traffic, to gain the world, and lose our own souls. So, that upon the whole, it will be impossible to find any real use toward a virtuous or happy life, by denying the mysteries of the Gospel.

Fourthly: Those strong unbelievers, who expect that all mysteries should be squared and fitted to their own reason, might have somewhat to say for themselves, if they could satisfy the general reason of mankind in their opinions: But herein they are miserably defective, absurd, and ridiculous; they strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel; they can believe that the world was made by chance; that God doth not concern himself with things below; will neither punish vice, nor reward virtue; that religion was invented by cunning men to keep the world in awe; with many other opinions equally false and detestable, against the common light of nature as well as reason; against the universal sentiments of all civilized nations, and offensive to the ears even of a sober heathen.

Lastly: Since the world abounds with pestilent books particularly against this doctrine of the Trinity; it is fit to inform you, that the authors of them proceed wholly upon a mistake: They would shew how impossible it is that three can be one, and one can be three; whereas the Scripture saith no such thing, at least in that manner they would make it: but, only, that there is some kind of unity and distinction in the divine nature, which mankind cannot possibly comprehend: thus, the whole doctrine is short and plain, and in itself incapable of any controversy: since God himself hath pronounced the fact, but wholly concealed the manner. And therefore many divines, who thought fit to answer those wicked books, have been mistaken too, by answering fools in their folly; and endeavouring to explain a mystery, which God intended to keep secret from us. And, as I would exhort all men to avoid reading those wicked books written against this doctrine, as dangerous and pernicious; so I think they may omit the answers, as unnecessary. This I confess will probably affect but few or none among the generality of our congregations, who do not much trouble themselves with books, at least of this kind. However, many who do not read themselves, are seduced by others that do; and thus become unbelievers

upon trust and at second-hand; and this is too frequent a case: for which reason I have endeavoured to put this doctrine upon a short and sure foot, levelled to the meanest understanding; by which we may, as the apostle directs, be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.

And, thus I have done with my subject, which probably I should not have chosen, if I had not been invited to it by the occasion of this season, appointed on purpose to celebrate the mysteries of the Trinity, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, wherein we pray to be kept stedfast in this faith; and what this faith is I have shewn you in the plainest manner I could. For, upon the whole, it is no more than this: God commandeth us, by our dependence upon His truth, and His Holy Word, to believe a fact that we do not understand. And, this is no more than what we do every day in the works of nature, upon the credit of men of learning. Without faith we can do no works acceptable to God; for, if they proceed from any other principle, they will not advance our salvation; and this faith, as I have explained it, we may acquire without giving up our senses, or contradicting our reason. May God of his infinite mercy inspire us with true faith in every article and mystery of our holy religion, so as to dispose us to do what is pleasing in his sight; and this we pray through Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the mysterious, incomprehensible ONE GOD, be all honour and glory now and for evermore! *Amen.*

ON

BROTHERLY LOVE.[1]

HEB. XIII. I.

"Let brotherly love continue."

IN the early times of the Gospel, the Christians were very much distinguished from all other bodies of men, by the great and constant love they bore to each other; which, although it was done in obedience to the frequent injunctions of our Saviour and his apostles, yet, I confess, there seemeth to have been likewise a natural reason, that very much promoted it. For the Christians then were few and scattered, living under persecution by the heathens round about them, in whose hands was all the civil and military power; and there is nothing so apt to unite the minds and hearts of men, or to beget love and tenderness, as a general distress. The first dissensions between Christians took their beginning from the errors and heresies that arose among them; many of those heresies, sometimes extinguished, and sometimes reviving, or succeeded by others, remain to this day; and having been made instruments to the pride, avarice, or ambition, of ill-designing men, by extinguishing brotherly love, have been the cause of infinite calamities, as

[1] Notwithstanding the text and title of this sermon, and the many excellent observations which it contains in illustration of both, there are several passages in it which the dissenters of the time would hardly consider as propitiatory towards the continuance of brotherly love. There are also various allusions to the parties which raged at the time, and some which appear to have been written in defence of the preacher's character, then severely arraigned by the Irish Whigs, and held in abhorrence by the people of Dublin, by whom he was afterwards idolized. [S.]

well as corruptions of faith and manners, in the Christian world.

The last legacy of Christ was peace and mutual love; but then he foretold, that he came to send a sword upon the earth: The primitive Christians accepted the legacy, and their successors down to the present age have been largely fulfilling his prophecy. But whatever the practice of mankind hath been, or still continues, there is no duty more incumbent upon those who profess the Gospel, than that of brotherly love; which, whoever could restore in any degree among men, would be an instrument of more good to human society, than ever was, or will be, done by all the statesmen and politicians in the world.

It is upon this subject of brotherly love, that I intend to discourse at present, and the method I observe shall be as follows:—

I. *First*, I will inquire into the causes of this great want of brotherly love among us.
II. *Secondly*, I will lay open the sad effects and consequences, which our animosities and mutual hatred have produced.
III. *Lastly*, I will use some motives and exhortations, that may persuade you to embrace brotherly love, and continue in it.

I. *First*, I shall enquire into the causes of this great want of brotherly love among us.

This nation of ours hath, for an hundred years past, been infested by two enemies, the Papists and fanatics, who, each in their turns, filled it with blood and slaughter, and, for a time, destroyed both the Church and government. The memory of these events hath put all true Protestants equally upon their guard against both these adversaries, who, by consequence, do equally hate us. The fanatics revile us, as too nearly approaching to Popery; and the Papists condemn us, as bordering too much on fanaticism. The Papists, God be praised, are, by the wisdom of our laws, put out of all visible possibility of hurting us; besides, their religion is so generally abhorred, that they have no advocates or abettors among Protestants to assist them. But the fanatics are to be considered in another light; they have had of late

years the power, the luck, or the cunning, to divide us among ourselves; they have endeavoured to represent all those who have been so bold as to oppose their errors and designs, under the character of persons disaffected to the government; and they have so far succeeded, that, now-a-days, if a clergyman happens to preach with any zeal and vehemence against the sin and danger of schism, there will not want too many, in his congregation, ready enough to censure him as hot and high-flying, an inflamer of men's minds, an enemy to moderation, and disloyal to his prince. This hath produced a formed and settled division between those who profess the same doctrine and discipline; while they who call themselves moderate are forced to widen their bottom, by sacrificing their principles and their brethren to the encroachments and insolence of dissenters, who are therefore answerable, as a principal cause of all that hatred and animosity now reigning among us.

Another cause of the great want of brotherly love is the weakness and folly of too many among you of the lower sort, who are made the tools and instruments of your betters to work their designs, wherein you have no concern. Your numbers make you of use, and cunning men take the advantage, by putting words into your mouths, which you do not understand; then they fix good or ill characters to those words, as it best serves their purposes: And thus you are taught to love or hate, you know not what or why; you often suspect your best friends, and nearest neighbours, even your teacher himself, without any reason, if your leaders once taught you to call him by a name, which they tell you signifieth some very bad thing.

A third cause of our great want of brotherly love seemeth to be, that this duty is not so often insisted on from the pulpit, as it ought to be in such times as these; on the contrary, it is to be doubted, whether doctrines are not sometimes delivered by an ungoverned zeal, a desire to be distinguished, or a view of interest, which produce quite different effects; when, upon occasions set apart to return thanks to God for some public blessing, the time is employed in stirring up one part of the congregation against the other, by representations of things and persons, which God, in his mercy, forgive those who are guilty of.

The last cause I shall mention of the want of brotherly love is, that unhappy disposition towards politics among the trading people, which has been industriously instilled into them. In former times, the middle and lower sorts of mankind seldom gained or lost by the factions of the kingdom, and therefore were little concerned in them, further than as matter of talk and amusement; but now the meanest dealer will expect to turn the penny by the merits of his party. He can represent his neighbour as a man of dangerous principles, can bring a railing accusation against him, perhaps a criminal one, and so rob him of his livelihood, and find his own account by that much more than if he had disparaged his neighbour's goods, or defamed him as a cheat. For so it happens, that, instead of enquiring into the skill or honesty of those kind of people, the manner is now to enquire into their party, and to reject or encourage them accordingly; which proceeding hath made our people, in general, such able politicians, that all the artifice, flattery, dissimulation, diligence, and dexterity, in undermining each other, which the satirical wit of men hath charged upon courts; together with all the rage and violence, cruelty and injustice, which have been ever imputed to public assemblies; are with us (so polite are we grown) to be seen among our meanest traders and artificers in the greatest perfection. All which, as it may be matter of some humiliation to the wise and mighty of this world, so the effects thereof may, perhaps, in time, prove very different from what, I hope in charity, were ever foreseen or intended.

II. I will therefore now, in the second place, lay open some of the sad effects and consequences which our animosities and mutual hatred have produced.

And the first ill consequence is, that our want of brotherly love hath almost driven out all sense of religion from among us, which cannot well be otherwise; for since our Saviour laid so much weight upon his disciples loving one another, that he gave it among his last instructions; and since the primitive Christians are allowed to have chiefly propagated the faith by their strict observance of that instruction, it must follow that, in proportion as brotherly love declineth, Christianity will do so too. The little religion there is in

the world, hath been observed to reside chiefly among the middle and lower sorts of people, who are neither tempted to pride nor luxury by great riches, nor to desperate courses by extreme poverty: And truly I, upon that account, have thought it a happiness, that those who are under my immediate care are generally of that condition; but where party hath once made entrance, with all its consequences of hatred, envy, partiality, and virulence, religion cannot long keep its hold in any state or degree of life whatsoever. For, if the great men of the world have been censured in all ages for mingling too little religion with their politics, what a havoc of principles must they needs make in unlearned and irregular heads; of which indeed the effects are already too visible and melancholy all over the kingdom!

Another ill consequence from our want of brotherly love is, that it increaseth the insolence of the fanatics; and this partly ariseth from a mistaken meaning of the word moderation; a word which hath been much abused, and bandied about for several years past. There are too many people indifferent enough to all religion; there are many others, who dislike the clergy, and would have them live in poverty and dependence; both these sorts are much commended by the fanatics for moderate men, ready to put an end to our divisions, and to make a general union among Protestants. Many ignorant well-meaning people are deceived by these appearances, strengthened with great pretences to loyalty: and these occasions the fanatics lay hold on, to revile the doctrine and discipline of the Church, and even insult and oppress the clergy wherever their numbers or favourers will bear them out; insomuch, that one wilful refractory fanatic hath been able to disturb a whole parish for many years together. But the most moderate and favoured divines dare not own, that the word moderation, with respect to the dissenters, can be at all applied to their religion, but is purely personal or prudential. No good man repineth at the liberty of conscience they enjoy; and, perhaps a very moderate divine may think better of their loyalty than others do; or, to speak after the manner of men, may think it necessary, that all Protestants should be united against the common enemy; or out of discretion, or other reasons best known to himself,

be tender of mentioning them at all. But still the errors of the dissenters are all fixed and determined, and must, upon demand, be acknowledged by all the divines of our church, whether they be called, in party phrase, high or low, moderate or violent. And further, I believe it would be hard to find many moderate divines, who, if their opinion were asked whether dissenters should be trusted with power, could, according to their consciences, answer in the affirmative; from whence it is plain, that all the stir which the fanatics have made with this word moderation, was only meant to increase our divisions, and widen them so far as to make room for themselves to get in between. And this is the only scheme they ever had (except that of destroying root and branch) for the uniting of Protestants, they so much talk of.

I shall mention but one ill consequence more, which attends our want of brotherly love; that it hath put an end to all hospitality and friendship, all good correspondence and commerce between mankind. There are indeed such things as leagues and confederacies among those of the same party; but surely God never intended that men should be so limited in the choice of their friends: However, so it is in town and country, in every parish and street; the pastor is divided from his flock, the father from his son, and the house often divided against itself. Men's very natures are soured, and their passions inflamed, when they meet in party clubs, and spend their time in nothing else but railing at the opposite side; thus every man alive among us is encompassed with a million of enemies of his own country, among which his oldest acquaintance and friends, and kindred themselves, are often of the number; neither can people of different parties mix together without constraint, suspicion, or jealousy, watching every word they speak, for fear of giving offence, or else falling into rudeness and reproaches, and so leaving themselves open to the malice and corruption of informers, who were never more numerous or expert in their trade. And as a further addition to this evil, those very few, who, by the goodness and generosity of their nature, do in their own hearts despise this narrow principle of confining their friendship and esteem, their charity and good offices, to those of their own party, yet dare not discover their good inclinations,

for fear of losing their favour and interest. And others again, whom God had formed with mild and gentle dispositions. think it necessary to put a force upon their own tempers, by acting a noisy, violent, malicious part, as a means to be distinguished. Thus hath party got the better of the very genius and constitution of our people; so that whoever reads the character of the English in former ages, will hardly believe their present posterity to be of the same nation or climate.

III. I shall now, in the last place, make use of some motives and exhortations, that may persuade you to embrace brotherly love, and continue in it. Let me apply myself to you of the lower sort, and desire you will consider, when any of you make use of fair and enticing words to draw in customers, whether you do it for their sakes or your own. And then, for whose sakes do you think it is, that your leaders are so industrious to put into your heads all that party rage and virulence? Is it not to make you the tools and instruments, by which they work out their own designs? Has this spirit of faction been useful to any of you in your worldly concerns, except to those who have traded in whispering, backbiting, or informing, and wanted skill or honesty to thrive by fairer methods? It is no business of yours to inquire, who is at the head of armies, or of councils, unless you had power and skill to choose, neither of which is ever likely to be your case; and therefore to fill your heads with fears, and hatred of persons and things, of which it is impossible you can ever make a right judgment, or to set you at variance with your neighbour, because his thoughts are not the same as yours, is not only in a very gross manner to cheat you of your time and quiet, but likewise to endanger your souls.

Secondly: In order to restore brotherly love, let me earnestly exhort you to stand firm in your religion; I mean, the true religion hitherto established among us, without varying in the least either to Popery on the one side, or to fanaticism on the other; and in a particular manner beware of that word, moderation; and believe it, that your neighbour is not immediately a villain, a Papist, and a traitor, because the fanatics and their adherents will not allow him to be a moderate man.

Nay, it is very probable, that your teacher himself may be a loyal, pious, and able divine, without the least grain of moderation, as the word is too frequently understood. Therefore, to set you right in this matter, I will lay before you the character of a truly moderate man, and then I will give you the description of such a one as falsely pretendeth to that title.

A man truly moderate is steady in the doctrine and discipline of the Church, but with a due Christian charity to all who dissent from it out of a principle of conscience; the freedom of which, he thinketh, ought to be fully allowed, as long as it is not abused, but never trusted with power. He is ready to defend with his life and fortune the Protestant succession, and the Protestant established faith, against all invaders whatsoever. He is for giving the Crown its just prerogative, and the people their just liberties. He hateth no man for differing from him in political opinions; nor doth he think it a maxim infallible, that virtue should always attend upon favour, and vice upon disgrace. These are some few lineaments in the character of a truly moderate man; let us now compare it with the description of one who usually passeth under that title.

A moderate man, in the new meaning of the word, is one to whom all religion is indifferent; who although he denominates himself of the Church, regardeth it no more than a conventicle. He perpetually raileth at the body of the clergy, with exceptions only to a very few, who, he hopeth, and probably upon false grounds, are as ready to betray their rights and properties as himself. He thinketh the power of the people can never be too great, nor that of the prince too little; and yet this very notion he publisheth, as his best argument, to prove him a most loyal subject. Every opinion in government, that differeth in the least from his, tendeth directly to Popery, slavery, and rebellion. Whoever lieth under the frown of power, can, in his judgment, neither have common sense, common honesty, nor religion. Lastly, his devotion consisteth in drinking gibbets, confusion, and damnation;[1] in profanely idolizing the memory of one

[1] The subject of these political toasts was the theme of much discussion in Ireland. [S.]

dead prince,[1] and ungratefully trampling upon the ashes of another.[2]

By these marks you will easily distinguish a truly moderate man from those who are commonly, but very falsely, so called; and while persons thus qualified are so numerous and so noisy, so full of zeal and industry to gain proselytes, and spread their opinions among the people, it cannot be wondered at that there should be so little brotherly love left among us.

Lastly: It would probably contribute to restore some degree of brotherly love, if we would but consider, that the matter of those disputes, which inflame us to this degree, doth not, in its own nature, at all concern the generality of mankind. Indeed as to those who have been great gainers or losers by the changes of the world, the case is different; and to preach moderation to the first, and patience to the last, would perhaps be to little purpose: But what is that to the bulk of the people, who are not properly concerned in the quarrel, although evil instruments have drawn them into it? For, if the reasonable men on both sides were to confer opinions, they would find neither religion, loyalty, nor interest, are at all affected in this dispute. Not religion, because the members of the Church, on both sides, profess to agree in every article: Not loyalty to our prince, which is pretended to by one party as much as the other, and therefore can be no subject for debate: Not interest, for trade and industry lie open to all; and, what is further, concerns only those who have expectations from the public: So that the body of the people, if they knew their own good, might yet live amicably together, and leave their betters to quarrel among themselves, who might also probably soon come to a better temper, if they were less seconded and supported by the poor deluded multitude.

I have now done with my text, which I confess to have treated in a manner more suited to the present times, than to the nature of the subject in general. That I have not been more particular in explaining the several parts and properties of this great duty of brotherly love, the apostle to the Thessalonians will plead my excuse.—"Touching

[1] King William. [2] Queen Anne.

brotherly love" (saith he) "ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."[1] So that nothing remains to add, but our prayers to God, that he would please to restore and continue this duty of brotherly love or charity among us, the very bond of peace and of all virtues.

Nov. 29, 1717.

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 9.

THE

DIFFICULTY OF KNOWING ONE'S-SELF.[1]

2 KINGS, VIII. PART OF THE 13TH VERSE.

"And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"

WE have a very singular instance of the deceitfulness of the heart, represented to us in the person of Hazael; who was sent to the prophet Elisha, to enquire of the Lord concerning his master the King of Syria's recovery. For the man of God, having told him that the king might recover from the disorder he was then labouring under, begun to set and fasten his countenance upon him of a sudden, and to break out into the most violent expressions of sorrow, and a deep concern for it; whereupon, when Hazael, full of shame and confusion, asked, "Why weepeth my lord?" he answered, "Because I know all the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel; their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child." Thus much did the man of God say and know of him, by a

[1] Prefixed to the issue in volume ten, "Miscellanies," 1745, is the following:

"ADVERTISEMENT.

"The manuscript title page of the following sermon being lost, and no memorandum writ upon it, as there were upon the others, when and where it was preached, made the editor doubtful whether he should print it as the Dean's, or not. But its being found amongst the same papers; and the hand, though writ somewhat better, bearing a great similitude to the Dean's, made him willing to lay it before the public, that they might judge whether the style and manner also does not render it still more probable to be his." [T. S.]

light darted into his mind from heaven. But Hazael not knowing himself so well as the other did, was startled and amazed at the relation, and would not believe it possible that a man of his temper could ever run out into such enormous instances of cruelty and inhumanity. "What!" says he, "is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"

And yet, for all this, it is highly probable that he was then that man he could not imagine himself to be; for we find him, on the very next day after his return, in a very treacherous and disloyal manner murdering his own master, and usurping his kingdom; which was but a prologue to the sad tragedy which he afterwards acted upon the people of Israel.

And now the case is but very little better with most men, than it was with Hazael; however it comes to pass, they are wonderfully unacquainted with their own temper and disposition, and know very little of what passes within them: For of so many proud, ambitious, revengeful, envying, and ill-natured persons, that are in the world, where is there one of them, who, although he has all the symptoms of the vice appearing upon every occasion, can look with such an impartial eye upon himself, as to believe that the imputation thrown upon him is not altogether groundless and unfair? Who, if he were told by men of a discerning spirit and a strong conjecture, of all the evil and absurd things which that false heart of his would at one time or other betray him into, would not believe as little, and wonder as much, as Hazael did before him? Thus, for instance; tell an angry person that he is weak and impotent, and of no consistency of mind; tell him, that such or such a little accident, which he may then despise and think much below a passion, shall hereafter make him say and do several absurd, indiscreet, and misbecoming things: He may perhaps own that he has a spirit of resentment within him, that will not let him be imposed on, but he fondly imagines that he can lay a becoming restraint upon it when he pleases, although 'tis ever running away with him into some indecency or other.

Therefore, to bring the words of my text to our present occasion, I shall endeavour, in a further prosecution of them, to evince the great necessity of a nice and curious inspection into the several recesses of the heart, being the surest and the

shortest method that a wicked man can take to reform himself: For let us but stop the fountain, and the streams will spend and waste themselves away in a very little time; but if we go about, like children, to raise a bank, and to stop the current, not taking notice all the while of the spring which continually feeds it, when the next flood of temptation rises, and breaks in upon it, then we shall find that we have begun at the wrong end of our duty, and that we are very little more the better for it, than if we had sat still, and made no advances at all.

But, in order to a clearer explanation of the point, I shall speak to these following particulars:—

First: By endeavouring to prove, from particular instances, that man is generally the most ignorant creature in the world of himself.

Secondly: By inquiring into the grounds and reasons of his ignorance.

Thirdly and *Lastly:* By proposing several advantages that do most assuredly attend a due improvement in the knowledge of ourselves.

First, then: To prove that man is generally the most ignorant creature in the world, of himself.

To pursue the heart of man through all the instances of life, in all its several windings and turnings, and under that infinite variety of shapes and appearances which it puts on, would be a difficult and almost impossible undertaking; so that I shall confine myself to such as have a nearer reference to the present occasion, and do, upon a closer view, shew themselves through the whole business of repentance. For we all know what it is to repent, but whether he repents him truly of his sins or not, who can know it?

Now the great duty of repentance is chiefly made up of these two parts, a hearty sorrow for the follies and miscarriages of the time past, and a full purpose and resolution of amendment for the time to come. And now, to shew the falseness of the heart in both these parts of repentance. And

First: As to a hearty sorrow for the sins and miscarriages of the time past. Is there a more usual thing than for a

man to impose upon himself, by putting on a grave and demure countenance, by casting a severe look into his past conduct, and making some few pious and devout reflections upon it, and then to believe that he has repented to an excellent purpose, without ever letting it step forth into practice, and shew itself in a holy conversation? Nay, some persons do carry the deceit a little higher; who if they can but bring themselves to weep for their sins, they are then full of an ill-grounded confidence and security; never considering that all this may prove to be no more than the very garb and outward dress of a contrite heart, which another heart, as hard as the nether millstone, may as well put on. For tears and sighs, however in some persons they may be decent and commendable expressions of a godly sorrow, are neither necessary, nor infallible signs of a true and unfeigned repentance. Not necessary, because sometimes, and in some persons, the inward grief and anguish of the mind may be too big to be expressed by so little a thing as a tear, and then it turneth its edge inward upon the mind; and like those wounds of the body which bleed inwardly, generally proves the most fatal and dangerous to the whole body of sin: Not infallible, because a very small portion of sorrow may make some tender dispositions melt, and break out into tears; or a man may perhaps weep at parting with his sins, as he would bid the last farewell to an old friend.

But there is still a more pleasant cheat in this affair, that when we find a deadness, and a strange kind of unaptness and indisposition to all impressions of religion, and that we cannot be as truly sorry for our sins as we should be, we then pretend to be sorry that we are not more sorry for them; which is not more absurd and irrational, than that a man should pretend to be very angry at a thing, because he did not know how to be angry at all.

But after all, what is wanting in this part of repentance, we expect to make up in the next; and to that purpose we put on a resolution of amendment, which we take to be as firm as a house built upon a rock; so that let the floods arise, and the winds blow, and the streams beat vehemently upon it, nothing shall shake it into ruin or disorder. We doubt not, upon the strength of this resolve, to stand fast and unmoved amid the storm of a temptation; and do

firmly believe, at the time we make it, that nothing in the world will ever be able to make us commit those sins over again, which we have so firmly resolved against.

Thus many a time have we come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, with a full purpose of amendment, and with as full a persuasion of putting that same purpose into practice; and yet have we not all as often broke that good purpose, and falsified that same persuasion, by starting aside, like a broken bow, into those very sins, which we then so solemnly and so confidently declared against?

Whereas had but any other person entered with us into a vow so solemn, that he had taken the Holy Sacrament upon it, I believe had he but once deceived us by breaking in upon the vow, we should hardly ever after be prevailed upon to trust that man again, though we still continue to trust our own fears, against reason and against experience.

This indeed is a dangerous deceit enough, and will of course betray all those well-meaning persons into sin and folly, who are apt to take religion for a much easier thing than it is. But this is not the only mistake we are apt to run into; we do not only think sometimes that we can do more than we can do, but sometimes that we are incapable of doing less; an error of another kind indeed, but not less dangerous, arising from a diffidence and false humility. For how much a wicked man can do in the business of religion, if he would but do his best, is very often more than he can tell.

Thus nothing is more common than to see a wicked man running headlong into sin and folly, against his reason, against his religion, and against his God. Tell him, that what he is going to do will be an infinite disparagement to his understanding, which, at another time, he sets no small value upon; tell him that it will blacken his reputation, which he had rather die for than lose; tell him that the pleasure of sin is short and transient, and leaves a vexatious kind of sting behind it, which will very hardly be drawn forth; tell him that this is one of those things for which God will most surely bring him to judgment, which he pretends to believe with a full assurance and persuasion: And yet for all this, he shuts his eyes against all conviction, and rusheth into the sin like a horse into battle; as if he had nothing

left to do, but, like a silly child to wink hard, and to think to escape a certain and infinite mischief, only by endeavouring not to see it.

And now to shew that the heart has given in a false report of the temptation, we may learn from this, that the same weak man would resist and master the same powerful temptation, upon considerations of infinitely less value than those which religion offers, nay such vile considerations, that the grace of God cannot without blasphemy be supposed to add any manner of force and efficacy to them. Thus for instance, it would be a hard matter to dress up a sin in such soft and tempting circumstances, that a truly covetous man would not resist for a considerable sum of money; when neither the hopes of heaven nor the fears of hell could make an impression upon him before. But can anything be a surer indication of the deceitfulness of the heart, than thus to shew more courage, resolution, and activity, in an ill cause, than it does in a good one? And to exert itself to better purpose, when it is to serve its own pride, or lust, or revenge, or any other passion, than when it is to serve God upon motives of the Gospel, and upon all the arguments that have ever been made use of to bring men over to religion and a good life? And thus having shewn that man is wonderfully apt to deceive and impose upon himself, in passing through the several stages of that great duty, repentance, I proceed now, in the

Second place: To inquire into the grounds and reasons of this ignorance, *and to shew whence it comes to pass that man, the only creature in the world that can reflect and look into himself, should know so little of what passes within him, and be so very much unacquainted even with the standing dispositions and complexion of his own heart.* The prime reason of it is, because we so very seldom converse with ourselves, and take so little notice of what passes within us: For a man can no more know his own heart than he can know his own face, any other way than by reflection: He may as well tell over every feature of the smaller portions of his face without the help of a looking-glass, as he can tell all the inward bents and tendencies of his soul, those standing features and lineaments of the inward man, and know

all the various changes that this is liable to from custom, from passion, and from opinion, without a very frequent use of looking within himself.

For our passions and inclinations are not always upon the wing, and always moving toward their respective objects, but retire now and then into the more dark and hidden recesses of the heart, where they lie concealed for a while, until a fresh occasion calls them forth again: So that not every transient, oblique glance upon the mind can bring a man into a thorough knowledge of all its strength and weaknesses; for a man may sometimes turn the eye of the mind inward upon itself, as he may behold his natural face in a glass, and go away, "and straight forget what manner of man he was." But a man must rather sit down and unravel every action of the past day into all its circumstances and particularities, and observe how every little thing moved and affected him, and what manner of impression it made upon his heart; this done with that frequency and carefulness which the importance of the duty does require, would in a short time bring him into a nearer and more intimate acquaintance with himself.

But when men instead of this do pass away months and years in a perfect slumber of the mind, without once awaking it, it is no wonder they should be so very ignorant of themselves, and know very little more of what passes within them than the very beasts which perish. But here it may not be amiss to inquire into the reasons why most men have so little conversation with themselves.

And, *first:* Because this reflection is a work and labour of the mind, and cannot be performed without some pain and difficulty: For, before a man can reflect upon himself, and look into his heart with a steady eye, he must contract his sight, and collect all his scattering and roving thoughts into some order and compass, that he may be able to take a clear and distinct view of them; he must retire from the world for a while, and be unattentive to all impressions of sense; and how hard and painful a thing must it needs be to a man of passion and infirmity, amid such a crowd of objects that are continually striking upon the sense, and soliciting the affections, not to be moved and interrupted by one or other of them. But,

Secondly: Another reason why we so seldom converse with ourselves, is, because the business of the world takes up all our time, and leaveth us no portion of it to spend upon this great work and labour of the mind. Thus twelve or fourteen years pass away before we can well discern good from evil; and of the rest so much goes away in sleep, so much in the proper business of our calling, that we have none to lay out upon the more serious and religious employments. Every man's life is an imperfect sort of a circle, which he repeats and runs over every day; he has a set of thoughts, desires, and inclinations, which return upon him in their proper time and order, and will very hardly be laid aside, to make room for anything new and uncommon: So that call upon him when you please, to set about the study of his own heart, and you are sure to find him pre-engaged; either he has some business to do, or some diversion to take, some acquaintance that he must visit, or some company that he must entertain, or some cross accident has put him out of humour, and unfitted him for such a grave employment. And thus it cometh to pass that a man can never find leisure to look into himself, because he does not set apart some portion of the day for that very purpose, but foolishly defers it from one day to another, till his glass is almost run out, and he is called to give a miserable account of himself in the other world. But,

Thirdly, Another reason why a man does not more frequently converse with himself, is, because such conversation with his own heart may discover some vice or some infirmity lurking within him, which he is very unwilling to believe himself guilty of. For can there be a more ungrateful thing to a man, than to find that upon a nearer view he is not that person he took himself to be? That he had neither the courage, nor the honesty, nor the piety, nor the humility that he dreamed he had? That a very little pain, for instance, putteth him out of patience, and as little pleasure softens and disarms him into ease and wantonness? That he has been at more pains, and labour, and cost, to be revenged of an enemy, than to oblige the best friend he has in the world? That he cannot bring himself to say his prayers, without a great deal of reluctancy; and when he does say them, the spirit and fervour of devotion evaporate in a very

short time, and he can scarcely hold out a prayer of ten lines, without a number of idle and impertinent, if not vain and wicked thoughts coming into his head? These are very unwelcome discoveries that a man may make of himself; so that 'tis no wonder that every one who is already flushed with a good opinion of himself, should rather study how to run away from it, than how to converse with his own heart.

But further, if a man were both able and willing to retire into his own heart, and to set apart some portion of the day for that very purpose; yet he is still disabled from passing a fair and impartial judgment upon himself, by several difficulties, arising partly from prejudice and prepossession, partly from the lower appetites and inclinations. And,

First: That the business of prepossession may lead and betray a man into a false judgment of his own heart. For we may observe, that the first opinion we take up of anything, or any person, does generally stick close to us; the nature of the mind being such, that it cannot but desire, and consequently endeavour to have some certain principles to go upon, something fixed and unmoveable, whereon it may rest and support itself. And hence it comes to pass, that some persons are with so much difficulty brought to think well of a man they have once entertained an ill opinion of: and perhaps that too for a very absurd and unwarrantable reason. But how much more difficult then must it be for a man, who takes up a fond opinion of his own heart long before he has either years or sense enough to understand it, either to be persuaded out of it by himself, whom he loveth so well, or by another, whose interest or diversion it may be to make him ashamed of himself! Then,

Secondly: As to the difficulties arising from the inferior appetites and inclinations, let any man look into his own heart, and observe in how different a light, and under what different complexions, any two sins of equal turpitude and malignity do appear to him, if he has but a strong inclination to the one, and none at all to the other. That which he has an inclination to, is always drest up in all the false beauty that a fond and busy imagination can give it; the other appears naked and deformed, and in all the true circumstances of folly and dishonour. Thus stealing is a vice that

few gentlemen are inclined to; and they justly think it below the dignity of a man to stoop to so base and low a sin; but no principle of honour, no workings of the mind and conscience, not the still voice of mercy, not the dreadful call of judgment, nor any considerations whatever, can put a stop to that violence and oppression, that pride and ambition, that revelling and wantonness, which we every day meet with in the world. Nay, it is easy to observe very different thoughts in a man, of the sin that he is most fond of, according to the different ebbs and flows of his inclination to it. For as soon as the appetite is alarmed, and seizeth upon the heart, a little cloud gathereth about the head, and spreads a kind of darkness over the face of the soul, whereby 'tis hindered from taking a clear and distinct view of things; but no sooner is the appetite tired and satiated, but the same cloud passes away like a shadow, and a new light springing up in the mind of a sudden, the man sees much more, both of the folly and of the danger of the sin, than he did before.

And thus having done with the several reasons why man, the only creature in the world that can reflect and look into himself, is so very ignorant of what passes within him, and so much unacquainted with the standing dispositions and complexions of his own heart: I proceed now, in the *Third* and *Last* place, to lay down several advantages, that do *most assuredly* attend a due improvement in the knowledge of ourselves. And,

First: One great advantage is, that it tends very much to mortify and humble a man into a modest and low opinion of himself. For let a man take a nice and curious inspection into all the several regions of the heart, and observe every thing irregular and amiss within him: for instance, how narrow and short-sighted a thing is the understanding; upon how little reason do we we take up an opinion, and upon how much less sometimes do we lay it down again, how weak and false ground do we often walk upon with the biggest confidence and assurance, and how tremulous and doubtful are we very often where no doubt is to be made. Again; how wild and impertinent, how busy and incoherent a thing is the imagination, even in the best and wisest men; insomuch that every man may be said to be mad, but every man

does not shew it. Then as to the passions; how noisy, how turbulent, and how tumultuous are they, how easy they are stirred and set a-going, how eager and hot in the pursuit, and what strange disorder and confusion do they throw a man into; so that he can neither think, nor speak, nor act as he should do, while he is under the dominion of any one of them.

Thus let every man look with a severe and impartial eye into all the distinct regions of the heart, and no doubt, several deformities and irregularities, that he never thought of, will open and disclose themselves upon so near a view; and rather make the man ashamed of himself, than proud.

Secondly: A due improvement in the knowledge of ourselves does certainly secure us from the sly and insinuating assaults of flattery. There is not in the world a baser and more hateful thing than flattery; it proceeds from so much falseness and insincerity in the man that gives it, and often discovers so much weakness and folly in the man that takes it, that it is hard to tell which of the two is most to be blamed. Every man of common sense can demonstrate in speculation, and may be fully convinced, that all the praises and commendations of the whole world can add no more to the real and intrinsic value of a man, than they can add to his stature. And yet, for all this, men of the best sense and piety, when they come down to the practice, cannot forbear thinking much better of themselves, when they have the good fortune to be spoken well of by other persons.

But the meaning of this absurd proceeding seems to be no other than this; there are few men that have so intimate an acquaintance with their own heart, as to know their own real worth, and how to set a just rate upon themselves, and therefore they do not know but that he who praises them most, may be most in the right of it. For, no doubt, if a man were ignorant of the true value of a thing he loved as well as himself, he would measure the worth of it according to the esteem of him who bids most for it, rather than of him that bids less.

Therefore, the most infallible way to disentangle a man from the snares of flattery, is, to consult and study his own heart; for whoever does that well, will hardly be so absurd,

as to take another man's word, before his own sense and experience.

Thirdly: Another advantage from this kind of study, is this, that it teaches a man how to behave himself patiently, when he has the ill fortune to be censured and abused by other people. For a man who is thoroughly acquainted with his own heart, does already know more evil of himself, than anybody else can tell him; and when any one speaks ill of him, he rather thanks God that he can say no worse. For could his enemy but look into the dark and hidden recesses of the heart, he considers what a number of impure thoughts he might there see brooding and hovering, like a dark cloud, upon the face of the soul; that there he might take a prospect of the fancy, and view it acting over the several scenes of pride, of ambition, of envy, of lust, and revenge; that there he might tell how often a vicious inclination has been restrained, for no other reason but just to save the man's credit or interest in the world; and how many unbecoming ingredients have entered into the composition of his best actions. And now, what man in the whole world would be able to bear so severe a test, to have every thought and inward motion of the heart laid open and exposed to the views of his enemies? But,

Fourthly, and *Lastly:* Another advantage of this kind is, that it makes men less severe upon other people's faults, and less busy and industrious in spreading them. For a man, employed at home, inspecting into his own failings, has not leisure to take notice of every little spot and blemish that lies scattered upon others. Or if he cannot escape the sight of them, he always passes the most easy and favourable construction upon them. Thus, for instance; does the ill he knows of a man proceed from an unhappy temper and constitution of body? He then considers with himself, how hard a thing it is, not to be borne down with the current of the blood and spirits, and accordingly lays some part of the blame upon the weakness of human nature, for he has felt the force and rapidity of it within his own breast; though perhaps, in another instance, he remembers how it rages and swells by opposition; and though it may be restrained, or diverted for a while, yet it can hardly ever be totally subdued.

Or has the man sinned out of custom? He then, from his own experience, traces a habit into the very first rise and imperfect beginnings of it; and can tell by how slow and insensible advances it creeps upon the heart; how it works itself by degrees into the very frame and texture of it, and so passes into a second nature; and consequently he has a just sense of the great difficulty for him to learn to do good, who has been long accustomed to do evil.

Or, lastly, has a false opinion betrayed him into a sin? He then calls to mind what wrong apprehensions he has made of some things himself; how many opinions, that he once made no doubt of, he has, upon a stricter examination found to be doubtful and uncertain; how many more to be unreasonable and absurd. He knows further, that there are a great many more opinions that he has never yet examined into at all, and which, however, he still believes, for no other reason, but because he has believed them so long already without a reason. Thus, upon every occasion, a man intimately acquainted with himself, consults his own heart, and makes every man's case to be his own, (and so puts the most favourable interpretation upon it). Let every man therefore look into his own heart, before he beginneth to abuse the reputation of another, and then he will hardly be so absurd as to throw a dart that will so certainly rebound and wound himself. And thus, through the whole course of his conversation, let him keep an eye upon that one great comprehensive rule of Christian duty, on which hangs, not only the law and the prophets, but the very life and spirit of the Gospel too: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Which rule, that we may all duly observe, by throwing aside all scandal and detraction, all spite and rancour, all rudeness and contempt, all rage and violence, and whatever tends to make conversation and commerce either uneasy, or troublesome, may the God of peace grant for Jesus Christ his sake, &c.

Consider what has been said, &c.

ON

FALSE WITNESS.

EXODUS, XX. 16.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

IN those great changes that are made in a country by the prevailing of one party over another, it is very convenient that the prince, and those who are in authority under him, should use all just and proper methods for preventing any mischief to the public from seditious men. And governors do well, when they encourage any good subject to discover (as his duty obligeth him) whatever plots or conspiracies may be anyway dangerous to the state: Neither are they to be blamed, even when they receive informations from bad men, in order to find out the truth, when it concerns the public welfare. Every one indeed is naturally inclined to have an ill opinion of an informer; although it is not impossible but an honest man may be called by that name. For whoever knoweth anything, the telling of which would prevent some great evil to his prince, his country, or his neighbour, is bound in conscience to reveal it. But the mischief is, that, when parties are violently enflamed, which seemeth unfortunately to be our case at present, there is never wanting a set of evil instruments, who, either out of mad zeal, private hatred, or filthy lucre, are always ready to offer their service to the prevailing side, and become accusers of their brethren, without any regard to truth or charity. Holy David numbers this among the chief of his sufferings; "False witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty."[1] Our Saviour and his apostles did likewise

[1] Psalm xxvii. 12.

undergo the same distress, as we read both in the Gospels and the Acts.

Now, because the sign of false witnessing is so horrible and dangerous in itself, and so odious to God and man; and because the bitterness of too many among us is risen to such a height, that it is not easy to know where it will stop, or how far some weak and wicked minds may be carried by a mistaken zeal, a malicious temper, or hope of reward, to break this great commandment delivered in the text; therefore, in order to prevent this evil, and the consequences of it, at least among you who are my hearers, I shall,

I. *First:* Shew you several ways by which a man may be called a false witness against his neighbour.
II. *Secondly:* I shall give you some rules for your conduct and behaviour, in order to defend yourselves against the malice and cunning of false accusers.
III. And *lastly:* I shall conclude with shewing you very briefly, how far it is your duty, as good subjects and good neighbours, to bear faithful witness, when you are lawfully called to it by those in authority, or by the sincere advice of your own consciences.

I. As to the first, there are several ways by which a man may be justly called a false witness against his neighbour.

First, According to the direct meaning of the word, when a man accuseth his neighbour without the least ground of truth. So we read, that Jezebel hired two sons of Belial to accuse Naboth for blaspheming God and the King, for which, although he was entirely innocent, he was stoned to death.[1] And in our age it is not easy, to tell how many men have lost their lives, been ruined in their fortunes, and put to ignominious punishment by the downright perjury of false witnesses! The law itself in such cases being not able to protect the innocent. But this is so horrible a crime, that it doth not need to be aggravated by words.

A second way by which a man becometh a false witness is, when he mixeth falsehood and truth together, or concealeth some circumstances, which, if they were told, would

[1] 1 Kings, xxi. 8-13.

destroy the falsehoods he uttereth. So the two false witnesses who accused our Saviour before the chief priests, by a very little perverting his words, would have made him guilty of a capital crime: for so it was among the Jews to prophesy any evil against the Temple: "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days;"[1] whereas the words, as our Saviour spoke them, were to another end, and differently expressed: For when the Jews asked him to shew them a sign, he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." In such cases as these, an innocent man is half confounded, and looketh as if he were guilty, since he neither can deny his words, nor perhaps readily strip them from the malicious additions of a false witness.

Thirdly: A man is a false witness, when, in accusing his neighbour, he endeavoureth to aggravate by his gestures and tone of his voice, or when he chargeth a man with words which were only repeated or quoted from somebody else. As if any one should tell me that he heard another speak certain dangerous and seditious speeches, and I should immediately accuse him for speaking them himself; and so drop the only circumstance that made him innocent. This was the case of St Stephen. The false witness said, "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law."[2] Whereas St Stephen said no such words; but only repeated some prophecies of Jeremiah or Malachi, which threatened Jerusalem with destruction if it did not repent. However, by the fury of the people, this innocent holy person was stoned to death for words he never spoke.

Fourthly: The blackest kind of false witnesses are those who do the office of the devil, by tempting their brethren in order to betray them. I cannot call to mind any instances of this kind mentioned in Holy Scripture. But I am afraid, this vile practice hath been too much followed in the world. When a man's temper hath been so soured by misfortunes and hard usage, that perhaps he hath reason enough to complain; then one of these seducers, under the pretence of friendship, will seem to lament his case, urge the hard-

[1] Mat. xxvi. 6. [2] Acts, vi. 13.

ships he hath suffered, and endeavour to raise his passions, until he hath said something that a malicious informer can pervert or aggravate against him in a court of justice.

Fifthly: Whoever beareth witness against his neighbour, out of a principle of malice and revenge, from any old grudge, or hatred to his person; such a man is a false witness in the sight of God, although what he says be true; because the motive or cause is evil, not to serve his prince or country, but to gratify his own resentments. And therefore, although a man thus accused may be very justly punished by the law, yet this doth by no means acquit the accuser, who, instead of regarding the public service, intended only to glut his private rage and spite.

Sixthly: I number among false witnesses, all those who make a trade of being informers in hope of favour or reward; and to this end employ their time, either by listening in public places, to catch up an accidental word; or in corrupting men's servants to discover any unwary expression of their master; or thrusting themselves into company, and then using the most indecent scurrilous language; fastening a thousand falsehoods and scandals upon a whole party, on purpose to provoke such an answer as they may turn to an accusation. And truly this ungodly race is said to be grown so numerous, that men of different parties can hardly converse together with any security. Even the pulpit hath not been free from the misrepresentation of these informers; of whom the clergy have not wanted occasions to complain with holy David: "They daily mistake my words, all they imagine is to do me evil." Nor is it any wonder at all, that this trade of informing should be now in a flourishing condition, since our case is manifestly thus: We are divided into two parties, with very little charity or temper toward each other; the prevailing side may talk of past things as they please, with security; and generally do it in the most provoking words they can invent; while those who are down, are sometimes tempted to speak in favour of a lost cause, and therefore, without great caution, must needs be often caught tripping, and thereby furnish plenty of materials for witnesses and informers.

Lastly: Those may be well reckoned among false witnesses against their neighbour, who bring him into trouble

and punishment by such accusations as are of no consequence at all to the public, nor can be of any other use but to create vexation. Such witnesses are those who cannot hear an idle intemperate expression, but they must immediately run to the magistrate to inform; or perhaps wrangling in their cups over night, when they were not able to speak or apprehend three words of common sense, will pretend to remember everything the next morning, and think themselves very properly qualified to be accusers of their brethren. God be thanked, the throne of our King [1] is too firmly settled to be shaken by the folly and rashness of every sottish companion. And I do not in the least doubt, that when those in power begin to observe the falsehood, the prevarication, the aggravating manner, the treachery and seducing, the malice and revenge, the love of lucre, and lastly, the trifling accusations in too many wicked people, they will be as ready to discourage every sort of those whom I have numbered among false witnesses, as they will be to countenance honest men, who, out of a true zeal to their prince and country, do, in the innocence of their hearts, freely discover whatever they may apprehend to be dangerous to either. A good Christian will think it sufficient to reprove his brother for a rash unguarded word, where there is neither danger nor evil example to be apprehended; or, if he will not amend by reproof, avoid his conversation.

II. And thus much may serve to shew the several ways whereby a man may be said to be a false witness against his neighbour. I might have added one kind more, and it is of those who inform against their neighbour out of fear of punishment to themselves, which, although it be more excusable, and hath less of malice than any of the rest, cannot, however, be justified. I go on, therefore, upon the second head, to give you some rules for your conduct and behaviour, in order to defend yourselves against the malice and cunning of false accusers.

It is readily agreed, that innocence is the best protection in the world; yet that it is not always sufficient without some degree of prudence, our Saviour himself intimateth to

[1] George I.

us, by instructing his disciples "to be wise as serpents, as well as innocent as doves." But if ever innocence be too weak a defence, it is chiefly so in jealous and suspicious times, when factions are arrived to an high pitch of animosity, and the minds of men, instead of being warmed by a true zeal for religion, are inflamed only by party fury. Neither is virtue itself a sufficient security in such times, because it is not allowed to be virtue, otherwise than as it hath a mixture of party.

However, although virtue and innocence are no infallible defence against perjury, malice, and subornation, yet they are great supports for enabling us to bear those evils with temper and resignation; and it is an unspeakable comfort to a good man under the malignity of evil mercenary tongues, that a few years will carry his appeal to an higher tribunal, where false witnesses, instead of daring to bring accusations before an all-seeing Judge, will call for mountains to cover them. As for earthly judges, they seldom have it in their power; and, God knows, whether they have it in their will, to mingle mercy with justice; they are so far from knowing the hearts of the accuser or the accused, that they cannot know their own; and their understanding is frequently biassed, although their intentions be just. They are often prejudiced to causes, parties, and persons, through the infirmity of human nature, without being sensible themselves that they are so: And therefore, although God may pardon their errors here, he certainly will not ratify their sentences hereafter.

However, since as we have before observed, our Saviour prescribeth to us to be not only harmless as doves, but wise as serpents; give me leave to prescribe to you some rules, which the most ignorant person may follow for the conduct of his life, with safety in perilous times, against false accusers.

1st, Let me advise you to have nothing at all to do with that which is commonly called politics, or the government of the world, in the nature of which it is certain you are utterly ignorant, and when your opinion is wrong, although it proceeds from ignorance, it shall be an accusation against you. Besides, opinions in government are right or wrong, just according to the humour and disposition of the times; and, unless you have judgment to distinguish, you may be

punished at one time for what you would be rewarded in another.

2dly, Be ready at all times, in your words and actions, to shew your loyalty to the king that reigns over you. This is the plain manifest doctrine of Holy Scripture: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme," &c.[1] And another apostle telleth us, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Kings are the ordinances of man by the permission of God, and they are ordained of God by his instrument man. The powers that be, the present powers, which are ordained by God, and yet in some sense are the ordinances of man, are what you must obey, without presuming to examine into rights and titles; neither can it be reasonably expected, that the powers in being, or in possession, should suffer their title to be publicly disputed by subjects without severe punishment. And to say the truth, there is no duty in religion more easy to the generality of mankind, than obedience to government: I say to the generality of mankind; because while their law, and property, and religion are preserved, it is of no great consequence to them by whom they are governed, and therefore they are under no temptation to desire a change.

3dly, In order to prevent any charge from the malice of false witnesses, be sure to avoid intemperance. If it be often so hard for men to govern their tongues when they are in their right senses, how can they hope to do it when they are heated with drink? In those cases most men regard not what they say, and too many not what they swear; neither will a man's memory, disordered with drunkenness, serve to defend himself, or satisfy him whether he were guilty or no.

4thly, Avoid, as much as possible, the conversation of those people, who are given to talk of public persons and affairs, especially of those whose opinions in such matters are different from yours. I never once knew any disputes of this kind managed with tolerable temper; but on both sides they only agree as much as possible to provoke the passions of each other, indeed with this disadvantage, that

[1] 1 Peter, ii. 13.

he who argueth on the side of power may speak securely the utmost his malice can invent; while the other lieth every moment at the mercy of an informer; and the law, in these cases, will give no allowance at all for passion, inadvertency, or the highest provocation.

I come now in the last place to shew you how far it is your duty as good subjects and good neighbours to bear faithful witness, when you are lawfully called to it by those in authority, or by the sincere advice of your own consciences.

In what I have hitherto said, you easily find, that I do not talk of bearing witness in general, which is and may be lawful upon a thousand accounts in relation to property and other matters, and wherein there are many scandalous corruptions, almost peculiar to this country, which would require to be handled by themselves. But I have confined my discourse only to that branch of bearing false witness, whereby the public is injured in the safety or honour of the prince, or those in authority under him.

In order therefore to be a faithful witness, it is first necessary that a man doth not undertake it from the least prospect of any private advantage to himself. The smallest mixture of that leaven will sour the whole lump. Interest will infallibly bias his judgment, although he be ever so firmly resolved to say nothing but truth. He cannot serve God and Mammon; but as interest is his chief end, he will use the most effectual means to advance it. He will aggravate circumstances to make his testimony valuable; he will be sorry if the person he accuseth should be able to clear himself; in short, he is labouring a point which he thinks necessary to his own good; and it would be a disappointment to him, that his neighbour should prove innocent.

5thly, Every good subject is obliged to bear witness against his neighbour, for any action or words, the telling of which would be of advantage to the public, and the concealment dangerous, or of ill example. Of this nature are all plots and conspiracies against the peace of a nation, all disgraceful words against a prince, such as clearly discover a disloyal and rebellious heart: But where our prince and country can possibly receive no damage or disgrace; where

no scandal or ill example is given; and our neighbour, it may be, provoked by us, happeneth privately to drop a rash or indiscreet word, which in strictness of law might bring him under trouble, perhaps to his utter undoing; there we are obliged, we ought, to proceed no further than warning and reproof.

In describing to you the several kinds of false witnesses, I have made it less necessary to dwell much longer upon this head; because a faithful witness like everything else is known by his contrary: Therefore it would be only a repetition of what I have already said to tell you, that the strictest truth is required in a witness; that he should be wholly free from malice against the person he accuses; that he should not aggravate the smallest circumstance against the criminal, nor conceal the smallest in his favour; and to crown all, though I have hinted it before, that the only cause or motive of his undertaking an office, so subject to censure, and so difficult to perform, should be the safety and service of his prince and country.

Under these conditions and limitations (but not otherwise,) there is no manner of doubt but a good man may lawfully and justly become a witness in behalf of the public, and may perform that office (in its own nature not very desirable) with honour and integrity. For the command in the text is positive as well as negative; that is to say, as we are directed not to bear false witness against our neighbour, so we are to bear true. Next to the word of God, and the advice of teachers, every man's conscience, strictly examined, will be his best director in this weighty point; and to that I shall leave him.

It might perhaps be thought proper to have added something by way of advice to those who are unhappily engaged in this abominable trade and sin of bearing false witness; but I am far from believing or supposing any of that destructive tribe are now my hearers. I look upon them as a sort of people that seldom frequent these holy places, where they can hardly pick up any materials to serve their turn, unless they think it worth their while to misrepresent or pervert the words of the preacher: And whoever is that way disposed, I doubt, cannot be in a very good condition to edify and reform himself by what he heareth. God in

his mercy preserve us from all the guilt of this grievous sin forbidden in my text, and from the snares of those who are guilty of it!

I shall conclude with one or two precepts given by Moses, from God, to the children of Israel, in the xxiiid of Exod. 1, 2.

"Thou shalt not raise a false report: Put not thine hand with the wicked, to be an unrighteous witness.

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many, to wrest judgment."

Now to God the Father, &c.

ON

THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD.[1]

I COR. III. 19.

"The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

IT is remarkable that, about the time of our Saviour's coming into the world, all kinds of learning flourished to a very great degree, insomuch that nothing is more frequent in the mouths of many men, even such who pretend to read and to know, than an extravagant praise and opinion of the wisdom and virtue of the Gentile sages of those days, and likewise of those ancient philosophers who went before them, whose doctrines are left upon record either by themselves or other writers. As far as this may be taken for granted, it may be said, that the providence of God brought this about for several very wise ends and purposes: For, it is certain that these philosophers had been a long time before searching out where to fix the true happiness of man; and, not being able to agree upon any certainty about it, they could not possibly but conclude, if they judged impartially, that all their enquiries were, in the end, but vain and fruitless; the consequence of which must be not only an acknowledgment of the weakness of all human wisdom, but likewise an open passage hereby made, for the letting in those beams of light, which the glorious sunshine of the Gospel then brought into the world, by revealing those hidden truths, which they had so long before been labouring to discover, and fixing the general happiness of mankind beyond all controversy

[1] The title of this sermon as given in Contents of Swift's "Works," vol. viii., pt. i. (4to, 1765) is, "A Sermon upon the Excellence of Christianity in Opposition to Heathen Philosophy." [T. S.]

and dispute. And therefore the providence of God wisely suffered men of deep genius and learning then to arise, who should search into the truth of the Gospel now made known, and canvass its doctrines with all the subtilty and knowledge they were masters of, and in the end freely acknowledge that to be the true wisdom only "which cometh from above." (James, iii. 15, 16, 17.)

However, to make a further enquiry into the truth of this observation, I doubt not but there is reason to think that a great many of those encomiums given to ancient philosophers are taken upon trust, and by a sort of men who are not very likely to be at the pains of an enquiry that would employ so much time and thinking. For the usual ends why men affect this kind of discourse, appear generally to be either out of ostentation, that they may pass upon the world for persons of great knowledge and observation; or, what is worse, there are some who highly exalt the wisdom of those Gentile sages, thereby obliquely to glance at and traduce Divine Revelation, and more especially that of the Gospel; for the consequence they would have us draw is this: That, since those ancient philosophers rose to a greater pitch of wisdom and virtue than was ever known among Christians, and all this purely upon the strength of their own reason and liberty of thinking, therefore it must follow, that either all Revelation is false, or, what is worse, that it has depraved the nature of man, and left him worse than it found him.

But this high opinion of heathen wisdom is not very ancient in the world, nor at all countenanced from primitive times: Our Saviour had but a low esteem of it, as appears by His treatment of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who followed the doctrines of Plato and Epicurus. St Paul likewise, who was well versed in all the Grecian literature, seems very much to despise their philosophy, as we find in his writings, cautioning the Colossians to "beware lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit." And, in another place, he advises Timothy to "avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called;" that is, not to introduce into the Christian doctrine the janglings of those vain philosophers, which they would pass upon the world for science. And the reasons he gives are, first, That those who professed them did err concerning the faith:

Secondly, Because the knowledge of them did encrease ungodliness, vain babblings being otherways expounded vanities, or empty sounds; that is, tedious disputes about words, which the philosophers were always so full of, and which were the natural product of disputes and dissensions between several sects.

Neither had the primitive fathers any great or good opinion of the heathen philosophy, as it is manifest from several passages in their writings: So that this vein of affecting to raise the reputation of those sages so high, is a mode and a vice but of yesterday, assumed chiefly, as I have said, to disparage revealed knowledge, and the consequences of it among us.

Now, because this is a prejudice which may prevail with some persons, so far as to lessen the influence of the Gospel, and whereas therefore this is an opinion which men of education are like to be encountered with, when they have produced themselves into the world; I shall endeavour to shew that their preference of heathen wisdom and virtue, before that of the Christian, is every way unjust, and grounded upon ignorance or mistake: In order to which I shall consider four things.

First, I shall produce certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy in general, fell short, and was very imperfect.

Secondly, I shall shew, in several instances, where some of the most renowned philosophers have been grossly defective in their lessons of morality.

Thirdly, I shall prove the perfection of Christian wisdom, from the proper characters and marks of it.

Lastly, I shall shew that the great examples of wisdom and virtue among the heathen wise men, were produced by personal merit, and not influenced by the doctrine of any sect; whereas, in Christianity, it is quite the contrary.

First, I shall produce certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy in general fell short, and was very imperfect.

My design is to persuade men, that Christian philosophy is in all things preferable to heathen wisdom; from which,

or its professors, I shall however have no occasion to detract. They were as wise and as good as it was possible for them under such disadvantages, and would have probably been infinitely more with such aids as we enjoy: But our lessons are certainly much better, however our practices may fall short.

The first point I shall mention is that universal defect which was in all their schemes, that they could not agree about their chief good, or wherein to place the happiness of mankind, nor had any of them a tolerable answer upon this difficulty, to satisfy a reasonable person. For, to say, as the most plausible of them did, that happiness consisted in virtue, was but vain babbling, and a mere sound of words, to amuse others and themselves; because they were not agreed what this virtue was, or wherein it did consist; and likewise, because several among the best of them taught quite different things, placing happiness in health or good fortune, in riches or in honour, where all were agreed that virtue was not, as I shall have occasion to shew, when I speak of their particular tenets.

The second great defect in the Gentile philosophy was, that it wanted some suitable reward proportioned to the better part of man, his mind, as an encouragement for his progress in virtue. The difficulties they met with upon the score of this default were great, and not to be accounted for: Bodily goods, being only suitable to bodily wants, are no rest at all for the mind; and, if they were, yet are they not the proper fruits of wisdom and virtue, being equally attainable by the ignorant and wicked. Now, human nature is so constituted, that we can never pursue anything heartily but upon hopes of a reward. If we run a race, it is in expectation of a prize, and the greater the prize the faster we run; for an incorruptible crown, if we understand it and believe it to be such, more than a corruptible one. But some of the philosophers gave all this quite another turn, and pretended to refine so far, as to call virtue its own reward, and worthy to be followed only for itself: Whereas, if there be anything in this more than the sound of the words, it is at least too abstracted to become a universal influencing principle in the world, and therefore could not be of general use.

It was the want of assigning some happiness, proportioned to the soul of man, that caused many of them, either, on the one hand, to be sour and morose, supercilious and untreatable; or, on the other, to fall into the vulgar pursuits of common men, to hunt after greatness and riches, to make their court, and to serve occasions; as Plato did to the younger Dionysius, and Aristotle to Alexander the Great. So impossible is it for a man, who looks no further than the present world, to fix himself long in a contemplation where the present world has no part: He has no sure hold, no firm footing; he can never expect to remove the earth he rests upon, while he has no support beside for his feet, but wants, like Archimedes, some other place whereon to stand. To talk of bearing pain and grief, without any sort of present or future hope, cannot be purely greatness of spirit; there must be a mixture in it of affectation, and an alloy of pride, or perhaps is wholly counterfeit.

It is true there has been all along in the world a notion of rewards and punishments in another life; but it seems to have rather served as an entertainment to poets, or as a terror of children, than a settled principle, by which men pretended to govern any of their actions. The last celebrated words of Socrates, a little before his death, do not seem to reckon or build much upon any such opinion; and Cæsar made no scruple to disown it, and ridicule it in open senate.

Thirdly, The greatest and wisest of all their philosophers were never able to give any satisfaction, to others and themselves, in their notions of a Deity. They were often extremely gross and absurd in their conceptions; and those who made the fairest conjectures are such as were generally allowed by the learned to have seen the system of Moses, if I may so call it, who was in great reputation at that time in the heathen world, as we find by Diodorus, Justin, Longinus, and other authors; for the rest, the wisest among them laid aside all notions after a Deity, as a disquisition vain and fruitless, which indeed it was, upon unrevealed principles; and those who ventured to engage too far fell into incoherence and confusion.

Fourthly, Those among them who had the justest conceptions of a Divine Power, and did also admit a Providence, had no notion at all of entirely relying and depending upon

either; they trusted in themselves for all things: But, as for a trust or dependence upon God, they would not have understood the phrase; it made no part of the profane style.

Therefore it was, that, in all issues and events, which they could not reconcile to their own sentiments of reason and justice, they were quite disconcerted: They had no retreat; but, upon every blow of adverse fortune, either affected to be indifferent, or grew sullen and severe, or else yielded and sunk like other men.

Having now produced certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy fell short, and was very imperfect; I go on, in the second place, to shew in several instances, where some of the most renowned philosophers have been grossly defective in their lessons of morality.

Thales, the founder of the Ionic sect, so celebrated for morality, being asked how a man might bear ill-fortune with greatest ease, answered, "By seeing his enemies in a worse condition." An answer truly barbarous, unworthy of human nature, and which included such consequences as must destroy all society from the world.

Solon, lamenting the death of a son, one told him, "You lament in vain:" "Therefore" (said he) "I lament, because it is in vain." This was a plain confession how imperfect all his philosophy was, and that something was still wanting. He owned that all his wisdom and morals were useless, and this upon one of the most frequent accidents in life. How much better could he have learned to support himself even from David, by his entire dependence upon God; and that before our Saviour had advanced the notions of religion to the height and perfection wherewith He hath instructed His disciples? Plato himself, with all his refinements, placed happiness in wisdom, health, good fortune, honour, and riches; and held that they who enjoyed all these were perfectly happy: Which opinion was indeed unworthy its owner, leaving the wise and the good man wholly at the mercy of uncertain chance, and to be miserable without resource.

His scholar, Aristotle, fell more grossly into the same notion; and plainly affirmed, "That virtue, without the goods of fortune, was not sufficient for happiness, but that a

wise man must be miserable in poverty and sickness." Nay, Diogenes himself, from whose pride and singularity one would have looked for other notions, delivered it as his opinion, "That a poor old man was the most miserable thing in life."

Zeno also and his followers fell into many absurdities, among which nothing could be greater than that of maintaining all crimes to be equal, which, instead of making vice hateful, rendered it as a thing indifferent and familiar to all men.

Lastly: Epicurus had no notion of justice but as it was profitable; and his placing happiness in pleasure, with all the advantages he could expound it by, was liable to very great exception: For, although he taught that pleasure did consist in virtue, yet he did not any way fix or ascertain the boundaries of virtue, as he ought to have done; by which means he misled his followers into the greatest vices, making their names to become odious and scandalous, even in the heathen world.

I have produced these few instances from a great many others, to shew the imperfection of heathen philosophy, wherein I have confined myself wholly to their morality. And surely we may pronounce upon it in the words of St James, that "This wisdom descended not from above, but was earthly and sensual." What if I had produced their absurd notions about God and the soul? It would then have completed the character given it by that apostle, and appeared to have been devilish too. But it is easy to observe, from the nature of these few particulars, that their defects in morals were purely the flagging and fainting of the mind, for want of a support by revelation from God.

I proceed therefore, in the third place, to shew the perfection of Christian wisdom from above, and I shall endeavour to make it appear from those proper characters and marks of it by the apostle before mentioned, in the third chapter, and 15th, 16th, and 17th verses.

The words run thus:

"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

"For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.

"But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

"The wisdom from above is first pure." This purity of the mind and spirit is peculiar to the Gospel. Our Saviour says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." A mind free from all pollution of lusts shall have a daily vision of God, whereof unrevealed religion can form no notion. This it is which keeps us unspotted from the world; and hereby many have been prevailed upon to live in the practice of all purity, holiness, and righteousness, far beyond the examples of the most celebrated philosophers.

It is "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated." The Christian doctrine teacheth us all those dispositions that make us affable and courteous, gentle and kind, without any morose leaven of pride or vanity, which entered into the composition of most heathen schemes: So we are taught to be meek and lowly. Our Saviour's last legacy was peace; and He commands us to forgive our offending brother unto seventy times seven. Christian wisdom is full of mercy and good works, teaching the height of all moral virtues, of which the heathens fall infinitely short. Plato indeed (and it is worth observing) has somewhere a dialogue, or part of one, about forgiving our enemies, which was perhaps the highest strain ever reached by man, without divine assistance; yet how little is that to what our Saviour commands us? "To love them that hate us; to bless them that curse us; and do good to them that despitefully use us."

Christian wisdom is "without partiality;" it is not calculated for this or that nation of people, but the whole race of mankind: Not so the philosophical schemes, which were narrow and confined, adapted to their peculiar towns, governments, or sects; but, "in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

Lastly: It is "without hypocrisy:" It appears to be what it really is; it is all of a piece. By the doctrines of the Gospel we are so far from being allowed to publish to the world those virtues we have not, that we are commanded to hide, even from ourselves, those we really have, and not to let our right hand know what our left hand does; unlike several branches of the heathen wisdom, which pretended to

teach insensibility and indifference, magnanimity and contempt of life, while, at the same time, in other parts it belied its own doctrines.

I come now, in the last place, to shew that the great examples of wisdom and virtue, among the Grecian sages, were produced by personal merit, and not influenced by the doctrine of any particular sect; whereas, in Christianity, it is quite the contrary.

The two virtues most celebrated by ancient moralists were Fortitude and Temperance, as relating to the government of man in his private capacity, to which their schemes were generally addressed and confined; and the two instances, wherein those virtues arrived at the greatest height, were Socrates and Cato. But neither those, nor any other virtues possessed by these two, were at all owing to any lessons or doctrines of a sect. For Socrates himself was of none at all; and although Cato was called a Stoic, it was more from a resemblance of manners in his worst qualities, than that he avowed himself one of their disciples. The same may be affirmed of many other great men of antiquity. From whence I infer, that those who were renowned for virtue among them, were more obliged to the good natural dispositions of their own minds, than to the doctrines of any sect they pretended to follow.

On the other side, As the examples of fortitude and patience, among the primitive Christians, have been infinitely greater and more numerous, so they were altogether the product of their principles and doctrine; and were such as the same persons, without those aids, would never have arrived to. Of this truth most of the apostles, with many thousand martyrs, are a cloud of witnesses beyond exception. Having therefore spoken so largely upon the former heads, I shall dwell no longer upon this.

And, if it should here be objected, Why does not Christianity still produce the same effects? it is easy to answer, First, That although the number of pretended Christians be great, yet that of true believers, in proportion to the other, was never so small; and it is a true lively faith alone, that by the assistance of God's grace, can influence our practice.

Secondly, we may answer, That Christianity itself has very

much suffered by being blended up with Gentile philosophy. The Platonic system, first taken into religion, was thought to have given matter for some early heresies in the Church. When disputes began to arise, the Peripatetic forms were introduced by Scotus, as best fitted for controversy. And, however this may now have become necessary, it was surely the author of a litigious vein, which has since occasioned very pernicious consequences, stopped the progress of Christianity, and been a great promoter of vice, verifying that sentence given by St James, and mentioned before, "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work." This was the fatal stop to the Grecians, in their progress both of arts and arms: Their wise men were divided under several sects, and their governments under several commonwealths, all in opposition to each other; which engaged them in eternal quarrels among themselves, while they should have been armed against the common enemy. And I wish we had no other examples from the like causes, less foreign or ancient than that. Diogenes said Socrates was a madman; the disciples of Zeno and Epicurus, nay of Plato and Aristotle, were engaged in fierce disputes about the most insignificant trifles. And, if this be the present language and practice among us Christians, no wonder that Christianity does not still produce the same effects which it did at first, when it was received and embraced in its utmost purity and perfection. For such a wisdom as this cannot "descend from above," but must be "earthly, sensual, devilish; full of confusion and every evil work": Whereas "the wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." This is the true heavenly wisdom, which Christianity only can boast of, and which the greatest of the heathen wise men could never arrive at.

Now to God the Father, &c. &c.

DOING GOOD:

A SERMON, ON THE OCCASION OF WOOD'S PROJECT.[1]

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR MDCCXXIV.

GALATIANS, VI. 10.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men."

NATURE directs every one of us, and God permits us, to consult our own private good before the private good of any other person whatsoever. We are, indeed, commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves, but not as well as ourselves. The love we have for ourselves is to be the pattern of that love we ought to have towards our neighbour: But, as the copy doth not equal the original, so my

[1] "I did very lately, as I thought it my duty, preach to the people under my inspection, upon the subject of Mr. Wood's coin; and although I never heard that my sermon gave the least offence, as I am sure none was intended; yet, if it were now printed and published, I cannot say, I would insure it from the hands of the common hangman; or my own person from those of a messenger." See "The Drapier's Letters," No. VI.

"'I never' (said the Dean in a jocular conversation), 'preached but twice in my life; and then they were not sermons, but pamphlets.' Being asked on what subject, he replied, 'They were against Wood's halfpence.'"—Pilkington's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 56.

"The pieces relating to Ireland are those of a public nature; in which the Dean appears, as usual, in the best light, because they do honour to his heart as well as to his head; furnishing some additional proofs, that, though he was very free in his abuse of the inhabitants of that country, as well natives as foreigners, he had their interest sincerely at heart, and perfectly understood it. His sermon upon Doing Good, though peculiarly adapted to Ireland and Wood's designs upon it, contains perhaps the best motives to patriotism that were ever delivered within so small a compass."—BURKE.

neighbour cannot think it hard, if I prefer myself, who am the original, before him, who is only the copy. Thus, if any matter equally concern the life, the reputation, the profit of my neighbour, and my own; the law of nature, which is the law of God, obligeth me to take care of myself first, and afterwards of him. And this I need not be at much pains in persuading you to; for the want of self-love, with regard to things of this world, is not among the faults of mankind. But then, on the other side, if, by a small hurt and loss to myself, I can procure a great good to my neighbour, in that case his interest is to be preferred. For example, if I can be sure of saving his life, without great danger to my own; if I can preserve him from being undone, without ruining myself, or recover his reputation without blasting mine; all this I am obliged to do: and, if I sincerely perform it, I do then obey the command of God, in loving my neighbour as myself.

But, beside this love we owe to every man in his particular capacity under the title of our neighbour, there is yet a duty of a more large extensive nature incumbent on us; which is, our love to our neighbour in his public capacity, as he is a member of that great body the commonwealth, under the same government with ourselves; and this is usually called love of the public, and is a duty to which we are more strictly obliged than even that of loving ourselves; because therein ourselves are also contained, as well as all our neighbours, in one great body. This love of the public, or of the commonwealth, or love of our country, was in ancient times properly known by the name of virtue, because it was the greatest of all virtues, and was supposed to contain all virtues in it: And many great examples of this virtue are left us on record, scarcely to be believed, or even conceived, in such a base, corrupted, wicked age as this we live in. In those times it was common for men to sacrifice their lives for the good of their country, although they had neither hope or belief of future rewards; whereas, in our days, very few make the least scruple of sacrificing a whole nation, as well as their own souls, for a little present gain; which often hath been known to end in their own ruin in this world, as it certainly must in that to come.

Have we not seen men, for the sake of some petty em-

ployment, give up the very natural rights and liberties of their country, and of mankind, in the ruin of which themselves must at last be involved? Are not these corruptions gotten among the meanest of our people, who, for a piece of money, will give their votes at a venture, for the disposal of their own lives and fortunes, without considering whether it be to those who are most likely to betray or defend them? But, if I were to produce only one instance of a hundred wherein we fail in this duty of loving our country, it would be an endless labour; and therefore I shall not attempt it.

But here I would not be misunderstood: By the love of our country I do not mean loyalty to our king, for that is a duty of another nature; and a man may be very loyal, in the common sense of the word, without one grain of public good at his heart. Witness this very kingdom we live in. I verily believe, that, since the beginning of the world, no nation upon earth ever shewed (all circumstances considered) such high constant marks of loyalty in all their actions and behaviour, as we have done: And, at the same time, no people ever appeared more utterly void of what is called a public spirit. When I say the people, I mean the bulk or mass of the people, for I have nothing to do with those in power.

Therefore I shall think my time not ill spent, if I can persuade most or all of you who hear me, to shew the love you have for your country, by endeavouring, in your several stations, to do all the public good you are able. For I am certainly persuaded, that all our misfortunes arise from no other original cause than that general disregard among us to the public welfare.

I therefore undertake to shew you three things.

First: That there are few people so weak or mean, who have it not sometimes in their power to be useful to the public.
Secondly: That it is often in the power of the meanest among mankind to do mischief to the public.
And, *Lastly:* That all wilful injuries done to the public are very great and aggravated sins in the sight of God.

First: There are few people so weak or mean, who have it not sometimes in their power to be useful to the public.

Solomon tells us of a poor wise man who saved a city by his counsel. It hath often happened that a private soldier, by some unexpected brave attempt, hath been instrumental in obtaining a great victory. How many obscure men have been authors of very useful inventions, whereof the world now reaps the benefit? The very example of honesty and industry in a poor tradesman will sometimes spread through a neighbourhood, when others see how successful he is; and thus so many useful members are gained, for which the whole body of the public is the better. Whoever is blessed with a true public spirit, God will certainly put it into his way to make use of that blessing, for the ends it was given him, by some means or other: And therefore it hath been observed in most ages, that the greatest actions, for the benefit of the commonwealth, have been performed by the wisdom or courage, the contrivance or industry, of particular men, and not of numbers; and that the safety of a kingdom hath often been owing to those hands from whence it was least expected.

But, *Secondly:* It is often in the power of the meanest among mankind to do mischief to the public: And hence arise most of those miseries with which the states and kingdoms of the earth are infested. How many great princes have been murdered by the meanest ruffians? The weakest hand can open a flood-gate to drown a country, which a thousand of the strongest cannot stop. Those who have thrown off all regard for public good, will often have it in their way to do public evil, and will not fail to exercise that power whenever they can. The greatest blow given of late to this kingdom, was by the dishonesty of a few manufacturers; who, by imposing bad ware at foreign markets, in almost the only traffic permitted to us, did half ruin that trade; by which this poor unhappy kingdom now suffers in the midst of sufferings. I speak not here of persons in high stations, who ought to be free from all reflection, and are supposed always to intend the welfare of the community: But we now find by experience, that the meanest instrument may, by the concurrence of accidents, have it in his power to bring a whole kingdom to the very brink of destruction, and is, at this present, endeavouring to finish his work; and hath agents among ourselves, who are contented to see their

own country undone, to be small sharers in that iniquitous gain, which at last must end in their own ruin as well as ours. I confess, it was chiefly the consideration of that great danger we are in, which engaged me to discourse to you on this subject; to exhort you to a love of your country, and a public spirit, when all you have is at stake; to prefer the interest of your prince and your fellow-subjects before that of one destructive impostor, and a few of his adherents.

Perhaps it may be thought by some, that this way of discoursing is not so proper from the pulpit. But surely, when an open attempt is made, and far carried on, to make a great kingdom one large poorhouse, to deprive us of all means to exercise hospitality or charity, to turn our cities and churches into ruins, to make the country a desert for wild beasts and robbers, to destroy all arts and sciences, all trades and manufactures, and the very tillage of the ground, only to enrich one obscure ill-designing projector, and his followers; it is time for the pastor to cry out that the wolf is getting into his flock, to warn them to stand together, and all to consult the common safety. And God be praised for His infinite goodness in raising such a spirit of union among us, at least in this point, in the midst of all our former divisions; which union, if it continue, will, in all probability, defeat the pernicious design of this pestilent enemy to the nation.

But, from hence, it clearly follows how necessary the love of our country, or a public spirit, is in every particular man, since the wicked have so many opportunities of doing public mischief. Every man is upon his guard for his private advantage; but, where the public is concerned, he is apt to be negligent, considering himself only as one among two or three millions, among whom the loss is equally shared, and thus, he thinks, he can be no great sufferer. Meanwhile the trader, the farmer, and the shopkeeper, complain of the hardness and deadness of the times, and wonder whence it comes; while it is, in a great measure, owing to their own folly, for want of that love of their country, and public spirit and firm union among themselves, which are so necessary to the prosperity of every nation.

Another method by which the meanest wicked man, may

have it in his power to injure the public, is false accusation, whereof this kingdom hath afforded too many examples: Neither is it long since no man, whose opinions were thought to differ from those in fashion, could safely converse beyond his nearest friends, for fear of being sworn against, as a traitor, by those who made a traffic of perjury and subornation; by which the very peace of the nation was disturbed, and men fled from each other as they would from a lion or a bear got loose. And, it is very remarkable, that the pernicious project now in hand to reduce us to beggary, was forwarded by one of these false accusers, who had been convicted of endeavouring, by perjury and subornation, to take away the lives of several innocent persons here among us; and, indeed, there could not be a more proper instrument for such a work.

Another method by which the meanest people may do injury to the public, is the spreading of lies and false rumours, thus raising a distrust among the people of a nation, causing them to mistake their true interest, and their enemies for their friends: And this hath been likewise too successful a practice among us, where we have known the whole kingdom misled by the grossest lies, raised upon occasion to serve some particular turn. As it hath also happened in the case I lately mentioned, where one obscure man, by representing our wants where they were least, and concealing them where they were greatest, had almost succeeded in a project of utterly ruining this whole kingdom; and may still succeed, if God doth not continue that public spirit, which He hath almost miraculously kindled in us upon this occasion.

Thus we see the public is many times, as it were, at the mercy of the meanest instrument, who can be wicked enough to watch opportunities of doing it mischief, upon the principles of avarice or malice; which, I am afraid, are deeply rooted in too many breasts, and against which there can be no defence, but a firm resolution in all honest men, to be closely united and active in shewing their love to their country, by preferring the public interest to their present private advantage. If a passenger, in a great storm at sea, should hide his goods that they might not be thrown overboard to lighten the ship, what would be the conse-

quence? The ship is cast away, and he loses his life and goods together.

We have heard of men, who, through greediness of gain, have brought infected goods into a nation, which bred a plague, whereof the owners and their families perished first. Let those among us consider this and tremble, whose houses are privately stored with those materials of beggary and desolation, lately brought over to be scattered like a pestilence among their countrymen, which may probably first seize upon themselves and their families, until their houses shall be made a dunghill.

I shall mention one practice more, by which the meanest instruments often succeed in doing public mischief; and this is by deceiving us with plausible arguments, to make us believe that the most ruinous project they can offer is intended for our good, as it happened in the case so often mentioned. For the poor ignorant people, allured by the appearing convenience in their small dealings, did not discover the serpent in the brass,[1] but were ready, like the Israelites, to offer incense to it; neither could the wisdom of the nation convince them, until some, of good intentions, made the cheat so plain to their sight, that those who run may read. And thus the design was to treat us, in every point, as the Philistines treated Samson, (I mean when he was betrayed by Delilah) first to put out our eyes, and then bind us with fetters of brass.

I proceed to the last thing I proposed, which was to shew you that all wilful injuries done to the public, are very great and aggravated sins in the sight of God.

First: It is apparent from Scripture, and most agreeable to reason, that the safety and welfare of nations are under the most peculiar care of God's providence. Thus He promised Abraham to save Sodom, if only ten righteous men could be found in it. Thus the reason which God gave to Jonas for not destroying Nineveh was, because there were six score thousand men in that city.

All government is from God, Who is the God of order, and therefore whoever attempts to breed confusion or disturbance among a people, doth his utmost to take the

[1] "Brass" may be read "Wood's halfpence." [T. S.]

government of the world out of God's hands, and to put it into the hands of the Devil, who is the author of confusion. By which it is plain, that no crime, how heinous soever, committed against particular persons, can equal the guilt of him who does injury to the public.

Secondly: All offenders against their country lie under this grievous difficulty, that it is next to impossible to obtain a pardon, or make restitution. The bulk of mankind are very quick at resenting injuries, and very slow in forgiving them: And how shall one man be able to obtain the pardon of millions, or repair the injuries he hath done to millions? How shall those, who, by a most destructive fraud, got the whole wealth of our neighbouring kingdom into their hands, be ever able to make a recompence? How will the authors and promoters of that villainous project, for the ruin of this poor country, be able to account with us for the injuries they have already done, although they should no farther succeed? The deplorable case of such wretches, must entirely be left to the unfathomable mercies of God: For those who know the least in religion are not ignorant that, without our utmost endeavours to make restitution to the person injured, and to obtain his pardon, added to a sincere repentance, there is no hope of salvation given in the Gospel.

Lastly: All offences against our own country have this aggravation, that they are ungrateful and unnatural. It is to our country we owe those laws which protect us in our lives, our liberties, our properties, and our religion. Our country produced us into the world, and continues to nourish us so, that it is usually called our mother; and there have been examples of great magistrates, who have put their own children to death for endeavouring to betray their country, as if they had attempted the life of their natural parent.

Thus I have briefly shewn you how terrible a sin it is to be an enemy to our country, in order to incite you to the contrary virtue, which at this juncture is so highly necessary, when every man's endeavour will be of use. We have hitherto been just able to support ourselves under many hardships; but now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, and nothing but a firm union among us can prevent our utter undoing. This we are obliged to, in duty to our gracious King, as well as to ourselves. Let us therefore preserve

that public spirit, which God hath raised in us for our own temporal interest. For, if this wicked project should succeed, which it cannot do but by our own folly; if we sell ourselves for nought; the merchant, the shopkeeper, the artificer, must fly to the desert with their miserable families, there to starve or live upon rapine, or at least exchange their country for one more hospitable than that where they were born.

Thus much I thought it my duty to say to you, who are under my care, to warn you against those temporal evils, which may draw the worst of spiritual evils after them; such as heart-burnings, murmurings, discontents, and all manner of wickedness which a desperate condition of life may tempt men to.

I am sensible that what I have now said will not go very far, being confined to this assembly; but I hope it may stir up others of my brethren to exhort their several congregations, after a more effectual manner, to shew their love for their country on this important occasion. And this, I am sure, cannot be called meddling in affairs of state.

I pray God protect his Most Gracious Majesty, and this kingdom, long under his government, and defend us from all ruinous projectors, deceivers, suborners, perjurers, false accusers, and oppressors; from the virulence of party and faction; and unite us in loyalty to our King, love to our country, and charity to each other.

And this we beg for Jesus Christ His sake: To Whom, &c.

ON

THE MARTYRDOM OF KING CHARLES I.

PREACHED AT ST PATRICK'S, DUBLIN, JAN. 30, 1725-26, BEING SUNDAY.

GENESIS, XLIX. 5, 6, 7.

"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

"O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall.

"Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

I KNOW very well, that the Church hath been often censured for keeping holy this day of humiliation, in memory of that excellent king and blessed martyr, Charles I., who rather chose to die on a scaffold, than betray the religion and liberties of his people, wherewith God and the laws had entrusted him. But, at the same time, it is manifest that those who make such censures are either people without any religion at all, or who derive their principles, and perhaps their birth, from the abettors of those who contrived the murder of that prince, and have not yet shewn the world that their opinions are changed. It is alleged, that the observation of this day hath served to continue and increase the animosity and enmity among our countrymen, and to disunite Protestants; that a law was made, upon the restoration of the Martyr's son, for a general pardon and oblivion, forbidding all reproaches upon that occasion; and, since

none are now alive who were actors or instruments in that tragedy, it is thought hard and uncharitable to keep up the memory of it for all generations.

Now, because I conceive most of you to be ignorant in many particulars concerning that horrid murder, and the rebellion which preceded it; I will,

First, relate to you so much of the story as may be sufficient for your information:
Secondly, I will tell you the consequences which this bloody deed had upon these kingdoms:
And, *Lastly*, I will shew you to what good uses this solemn day of humiliation may be applied.

As to the first: In the reign of this prince, Charles the Martyr, the power and prerogative of the king were much greater than they are in our times, and so had been for at least seven hundred years before; And the best princes we ever had, carried their power much farther than the blessed Martyr offered to do in the most blameable part of his reign. But, the lands of the Crown having been prodigally bestowed to favourites, in the preceding reigns, the succeeding kings could not support themselves without taxes raised by Parliament; which put them under a necessity of frequently calling those assemblies: And, the crown lands being gotten into the hands of the nobility and gentry, beside the possessions of which the Church had been robbed by King Henry the Eighth, power, which always follows property, grew to lean to the side of the people, by whom even the just rights of the Crown were often disputed.

But further: Upon the cruel persecution raised against the Protestants, under Queen Mary, among great numbers who fled the kingdom to seek for shelter, several went and resided at Geneva, which is a commonwealth, governed without a king, and where the religion, contrived by Calvin, is without the order of bishops. When the Protestant faith was restored by Queen Elizabeth, those who fled to Geneva returned among the rest home to England, and were grown so fond of the government and religion of the place they had left, that they used all possible endeavours to introduce both into their own country; at the same time continually

preaching and railing against ceremonies and distinct habits of the clergy, taxing whatever they disliked, as a remnant of Popery, and continued extremely troublesome to the Church and state, under that great Queen, as well as her successor King James I. These people called themselves Puritans, as pretending to a purer faith than those of the Church established. And these were the founders of our Dissenters. They did not think it sufficient to leave all the errors of Popery, but threw off many laudable and edifying institutions of the primitive Church, and, at last, even the government of bishops; which, having been ordained by the apostles themselves, had continued without interruption, in all Christian churches, for above fifteen hundred years. And all this they did, not because those things were evil, but because they were kept by the Papists. From thence they proceeded, by degrees, to quarrel with the kingly government; because, as I have already said, the city of Geneva, to which their fathers had flown for refuge, was a commonwealth, or government of the people.

These Puritans, about the middle of the Martyr's reign, were grown to a considerable faction in the kingdom, and in the Lower House of Parliament. They filled the public with the most false and bitter libels against the bishops and the clergy, accusing chiefly the very best among them of Popery; and, at the same time, the House of Commons grew so insolent and uneasy to the King, that they refused to furnish him with necessary supplies for the support of his family, unless upon such conditions as he could not submit to without forfeiting his conscience and honour, and even his coronation oath. And, in such an extremity, he was forced upon a practice, no way justifiable, of raising money; for which, however, he had the opinion of the judges on his side; for, wicked judges there were in those times as well as in ours. There were likewise many complaints, and sometimes justly, made against the proceedings of a certain court, called the Star-chamber, a judicature of great antiquity, but had suffered some corruptions, for which, however, the King was nowise answerable. I cannot recollect any more subjects of complaint with the least ground of reason, nor is it needful to recollect them, because this gracious King did, upon the first application, redress all

grievances by an act of Parliament, and put it out of his power to do any hardships for the future. But that wicked faction in the House of Commons, not content with all those marks of his justice and condescension, urged still for more; and joining with a factious party from Scotland, who had the same fancies in religion, forced him to pass an act for cutting off the head of his best and chief minister; and, at the same time, compelled him, by tumults and threatenings of a packed rabble, poisoned with the same doctrines, to pass another law, by which it should not be in his power to dissolve that Parliament without their own consent. Thus, by the greatest weakness and infatuation that ever possessed any man's spirit, this Prince did in effect sign his own destruction. For the House of Commons, having the reins in their own hands, drove on furiously; sent him every day some unreasonable demand, and when he refused to grant it, made use of their own power, and declared that an ordinance of both Houses, without the King's consent, should be obeyed as a law, contrary to all reason and equity, as well as to the fundamental constitution of the kingdom.

About this time the rebellion in Ireland broke out, wherein his Parliament refused to assist him; nor would accept his offer to come hither in person to subdue those rebels. These, and a thousand other barbarities, forced the King to summon his loyal subjects to his standard in his own defence. Meanwhile the English Parliament, instead of helping the poor Protestants here, seized on the very army that his Majesty was sending over for our relief, and turned them against their own Sovereign. The rebellion in England continued for four or five years: At last the King was forced to fly in disguise to the Scots, who sold him to the rebels. And these Puritans had the impudent cruelty to try his sacred person in a mock court of justice, and cut off his head; which he might have saved, if he would have yielded to betray the constitution in Church and state.

In this whole proceeding, Simeon and Levi were brethren; the wicked insinuations of those fanatical preachers stirring up the cruelty of the soldiers, who, by force of arms, excluded from the house every member of Parliament, whom they apprehended to bear the least inclination towards an agree-

ment with the King, suffering only those to enter who thirsted chiefly for his blood; and this is the very account given by their own writers: From whence it is clear that this Prince was, in all respects, a real martyr for the true religion and the liberty of the people. That odious Parliament had first turned the bishops out of the House of Lords; in a few years after, they murdered their King; then immediately abolished the whole House of Lords; and so, at last, obtained their wishes, of having a government of the people, and a new religion, both after the manner of Geneva, without a king, a bishop, or a nobleman; and this they blasphemously called "The kingdom of Christ and his saints."

This is enough for your information on the first head: I shall therefore proceed to the second, wherein I will shew you the miserable consequences which that abominable rebellion and murder produced in these nations.

First: The Irish rebellion was wholly owing to that wicked English Parliament. For the leaders in the Irish Popish massacre would never have dared to stir a finger, if they had not been encouraged by that rebellious spirit in the English House of Commons, which they very well knew must disable the King from sending any supplies to his Protestant subjects here; and, therefore, we may truly say that the English Parliament held the King's hands, while the Irish Papists here were cutting our grandfathers' throats.

Secondly: That murderous Puritan Parliament, when they had all in their own power, could not agree upon any one method of settling a form either of religion or civil government; but changed every day from schism to schism, from heresy to heresy, and from one faction to another: From whence arose that wild confusion, still continuing in our several ways of serving God, and those absurd notions of civil power, which have so often torn us with factions more than any other nation in Europe.

Thirdly: To this rebellion and murder have been owing the rise and progress of atheism among us. For, men observing what numberless villainies of all kinds were committed during twenty years, under pretence of zeal and the reformation of God's Church, were easily tempted to doubt

that all religion was a mere imposture: And the same spirit of infidelity, so far spread among us at this present, is nothing but the fruit of the seeds sown by those rebellious hypocritical saints.

Fourthly: The old virtue and loyalty, and generous spirit of the English nation, were wholly corrupted by the power, the doctrine, and the example of those wicked people. Many of the ancient nobility were killed, and their families extinct, in defence of their Prince and country, or murdered by the merciless courts of justice. Some of the worst among them favoured, or complied with the reigning iniquities, and not a few of the new set created, when the Martyr's son was restored, were such who had drunk too deep of the bad principles then prevailing.

Fifthly: The children of the murdered Prince were forced to fly, for the safety of their lives, to foreign countries; where one of them at least, I mean King James II., was seduced to Popery; which ended in the loss of his kingdoms, the misery and desolation of this country, and a long and expensive war abroad. Our deliverance was owing to the valour and conduct of the late King; and, therefore, we ought to remember him with gratitude, but not mingled with blasphemy or idolatry. It was happy that his interests and ours were the same: And God gave him greater success than our sins deserved. But, as a house thrown down by a storm, is seldom rebuilt without some change in the foundation; so it hath happened, that, since the late Revolution, men have sat much looser in the true fundamentals both of religion and government, and factions have been more violent, treacherous, and malicious than ever, men running naturally from one extreme into another; and, for private ends, taking up those very opinions professed by the leaders in that rebellion, which carried the blessed Martyr to the scaffold.

Sixthly: Another consequence of this horrid rebellion and murder was the destroying or defacing of such vast number of God's houses. "In their self-will they digged down a wall." If a stranger should now travel in England, and observe the churches in his way, he could not otherwise conclude, than that some vast army of Turks or heathens had been sent on purpose to ruin and blot out all marks of

Christianity. They spared neither the statues of saints, nor ancient prelates, nor kings, nor benefactors; broke down the tombs and monuments of men famous in their generations, seized the vessels of silver set apart for the holiest use, tore down the most innocent ornaments both within and without, made the houses of prayer dens of thieves, or stables for cattle. These were the mildest effects of Puritan zeal, and devotion for Christ; and this was what themselves affected to call a thorough reformation. In this kingdom those ravages were not so easily seen; for the people here being too poor to raise such noble temples, the mean ones we had were not defaced, but totally destroyed.

Upon the whole, it is certain, that although God might have found out many other ways to have punished a sinful people, without permitting this rebellion and murder, yet as the course of the world hath run ever since, we need seek for no other causes, of all the public evils we have hitherto suffered, or may suffer for the future, by the misconduct of princes, or wickedness of the people.

I go on now upon the third head, to shew you to what good uses this solemn day of humiliation may be applied.

First: It may be an instruction to princes themselves, to be careful in the choice of those who are their advisers in matters of law. All the judges of England, except one or two, advised the King, that he might legally raise money upon the subjects for building of ships without consent of Parliament; which, as it was the greatest oversight of his reign, so it proved the principal foundation of all his misfortunes. Princes may likewise learn from hence, not to sacrifice a faithful servant to the rage of a faction, nor to trust any body of men with a greater share of power than the laws of the land have appointed them, much less to deposit it in their hands until they shall please to restore it.

Secondly: By bringing to mind the tragedy of this day, and the consequences that have arisen from it, we shall be convinced how necessary it is for those in power to curb, in season, all such unruly spirits as desire to introduce new doctrines and discipline in the Church, or new forms of government in the state. Those wicked Puritans began, in Queen Elizabeth's time, to quarrel only with surplices and

other habits, with the ring in matrimony, the cross in baptism, and the like; thence they went on to further matters of higher importance, and, at last, they must needs have the whole government of the Church dissolved. This great work they compassed, first, by depriving the bishops of their seats in Parliament, then they abolished the whole order; and, at last, which was their original design, they seized on all the Church-lands, and divided the spoil among themselves; and, like Jeroboam, made priests of the very dregs of the people. This was their way of reforming the Church. As to the civil government, you have already heard how they modelled it upon the murder of their King, and discarding the nobility. Yet, clearly to shew what a Babel they had built, after twelve years' trial and twenty several sorts of government; the nation grown weary of their tyranny, was forced to call in the son of him whom those reformers had sacrificed. And thus were Simeon and Levi divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel.

Thirdly: Although the successors of these Puritans, I mean our present Dissenters, do not think fit to observe this day of humiliation; yet, since it would be very proper in them, upon some occasions, to renounce in a public manner those principles upon which their predecessors acted; and it will be more prudent in them to do so, because those very Puritans, of whom ours are followers, found by experience, that after they had overturned the Church and state, murdered their King, and were projecting what they called a kingdom of the saints, they were cheated of the power and possessions they only panted after, by an upstart sect of religion that grew out of their own bowels, who subjected them to one tyrant, while they were endeavouring to set up a thousand.

Fourthly: Those who profess to be followers of our Church established, and yet presume in discourse to justify or excuse that rebellion, and murder of the King, ought to consider, how utterly contrary all such opinions are to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, as well as to the articles of our Church, and to the preaching and practice of its true professors for above a hundred years. Of late times, indeed, and I speak it with grief of heart, we have heard even sermons of a strange nature; although reason would make one think it a very unaccountable way of procuring favour under

a monarchy, by palliating and lessening the guilt of those who murdered the best of kings in cold blood, and, for a time, destroyed the very monarchy itself. Pray God, we may never more hear such doctrine from the pulpit, nor have it scattered about in print, to poison the people!

Fifthly: Some general knowledge of this horrid rebellion and murder, with the consequences they had upon these nations, may be a warning to our people not to believe a lie, and to mistrust those deluding spirits, who, under pretence of a purer and more reformed religion, would lead them from their duty to God and the laws. Politicians may say what they please, but it is no hard thing at all for the meanest person, who hath common understanding, to know whether he be well or ill governed. If he be freely allowed to follow his trade and calling; if he be secure in his property, and hath the benefit of the law to defend himself against injustice and oppression; if his religion be different from that of his country, and the government think fit to tolerate it, (which he may be very secure of, let it be what it will;) he ought to be fully satisfied, and give no offence, by writing or discourse, to the worship established, as the dissenting preachers are too apt to do. But, if he hath any new visions of his own, it is his duty to be quiet, and possess them in silence, without disturbing the community by a furious zeal for making proselytes. This was the folly and madness of those ancient puritan fanatics: They must needs overturn heaven and earth, violate all the laws of God and man, make their country a field of blood, to propagate whatever wild or wicked opinions came into their heads, declaring all their absurdities and blasphemies to proceed from the Holy Ghost.

To conclude this head. In answer to that objection of keeping up animosity and hatred between Protestants, by the observation of this day; if there be any sect or sort of people among us, who profess the same principles in religion and government which those puritan rebels put in practice, I think it is the interest of all those who love the Church and King, to keep up as strong a party against them as possible, until they shall, in a body, renounce all those wicked opinions upon which their predecessors acted, to the disgrace of Christianity, and the perpetual infamy of the English nation.

When we accuse the Papists of the horrid doctrine, "that

no faith ought to be kept with heretics," they deny it to a man; and yet we justly think it dangerous to trust them, because we know their actions have been sometimes suitable to that opinion. But the followers of those who beheaded the Martyr have not yet renounced their principles; and, till they do, they may be justly suspected. Neither will the bare name of Protestants set them right. For surely Christ requires more from us than a profession of hating Popery, which a Turk or an atheist may do as well as a Protestant.

If an enslaved people should recover their liberty from a tyrannical power of any sort, who could blame them for commemorating their deliverance by a day of joy and thanksgiving? And doth not the destruction of a Church, a King, and three kingdoms, by the artifices, hypocrisy, and cruelty of a wicked race of soldiers and preachers, and other sons of Belial, equally require a solemn time of humiliation? Especially since the consequences of that bloody scene still continue, as I have already shewn, in their effects upon us.

Thus I have done with the three heads I proposed to discourse on. But before I conclude, I must give a caution to those who hear me, that they may not think I am pleading for absolute unlimited power in any one man. It is true, all power is from God, and, as the apostle says, "the powers that be are ordained of God;" but this is in the same sense that all we have is from God, our food and raiment, and whatever possessions we hold by lawful means. Nothing can be meant in those, or any other words of Scripture, to justify tyrannical power, or the savage cruelties of those heathen emperors who lived in the time of the apostles. And so St Paul concludes, "The powers that be are ordained of God:" For what? Why, "for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise, the reward, of them that do well." There is no more inward value in the greatest emperor, than in the meanest of his subjects: His body is composed of the same substance, the same parts, and with the same or greater, infirmities: His education is generally worse, by flattery, and idleness, and luxury, and those evil dispositions that early power is apt to give. It is therefore against common sense, that his private personal interest, or pleasure, should be put in the balance with the safety of

millions, every one of which is his equal by nature, equal in the sight of God, equally capable of salvation; and it is for their sakes, not his own, that he is entrusted with the government over them. He hath as high trust as can safely be reposed in one man, and, if he discharge it as he ought, he deserves all the honour and duty that a mortal may be allowed to receive. His personal failings we have nothing to do with, and errors in government are to be imputed to his ministers in the state. To what height those errors may be suffered to proceed, is not the business of this day, or this place, or of my function, to determine. When oppressions grow too great and universal to be borne, nature or necessity may find a remedy. But, if a private person reasonably expects pardon, upon his amendment, for all faults that are not capital, it would be a hard condition indeed, not to give the same allowance to a prince, who must see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears, which are often wilfully blind and deaf. Such was the condition of the Martyr, and is so, in some degree, of all other princes. Yet this we may justly say in defence of the common people, in all civilized nations, that it must be a very bad government indeed, where the body of the subjects will not rather choose to live in peace and obedience, than take up arms on pretence of faults in the administration, unless where the vulgar are deluded by false preachers to grow fond of new visions and fancies in religion; which, managed by dexterous men, for sinister ends of malice, envy, or ambition, have often made whole nations run mad. This was exactly the case in the whole progress of that great rebellion, and the murder of King Charles I. But the late Revolution under the Prince of Orange was occasioned by a proceeding directly contrary, the oppression and injustice there beginning from the throne: For that unhappy prince, King James II., did not only invade our laws and liberties, but would have forced a false religion upon his subjects, for which he was deservedly rejected, since there could be no other remedy found, or at least agreed on. But, under the blessed Martyr, the deluded people would have forced many false religions, not only on their fellow-subjects, but even upon their sovereign himself, and at the same time invaded all his undoubted rights; and, because he would not comply, raised a horrid rebellion,

wherein, by the permission of God, they prevailed, and put their sovereign to death, like a common criminal, in the face of the world.

Therefore, those who seem to think they cannot otherwise justify the late Revolution, and the change of the succession, than by lessening the guilt of the Puritans, do certainly put the greatest affront imaginable upon the present powers, by supposing any relation, or resemblance, between that rebellion and the late Revolution; and, consequently, that the present establishment is to be defended by the same arguments which those usurpers made use of, who, to obtain their tyranny, trampled under foot all the laws of both God and man.

One great design of my discourse was to give you warning against running into either extreme of two bad opinions, with relation to obedience. As kings are called gods upon earth, so some would allow them an equal power with God, over all laws and ordinances; and that the liberty, and property, and life, and religion of the subject, depended wholly upon the breath of the prince; which, however, I hope was never meant by those who pleaded for passive obedience. And this opinion hath not been confined to that party which was first charged with it, but hath sometimes gone over to the other, to serve many an evil turn of interest or ambition, who have been as ready to enlarge prerogative, where they could find their own account, as the highest maintainers of it.

On the other side, some look upon kings as answerable for every mistake or omission in government, and bound to comply with the most unreasonable demands of an unquiet faction; which was the case of those who persecuted the blessed Martyr of this day from his throne to the scaffold.

Between these two extremes, it is easy, from what hath been said, to choose a middle; to be good and loyal subjects, yet, according to your power, faithful assertors of your religion and liberties; to avoid all broachers and preachers of new-fangled doctrines in the Church; to be strict observers of the laws, which cannot be justly taken from you without your own consent: In short, "to obey God and the King, and meddle not with those who are given to change."

Which that you may all do, &c.

ON

THE POOR MAN'S CONTENTMENT.

PHILIPPIANS, CHAP. IV. PART OF THE 11TH VERSE.

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

THE holy Scripture is full of expressions to set forth the miserable condition of man during the whole progress of his life; his weakness, pride, and vanity; his unmeasurable desires, and perpetual disappointments; the prevalency of his passions, and the corruptions of his reason; his deluding hopes, and his real, as well as imaginary, fears; his natural and artificial wants; his cares and anxieties; the diseases of his body, and the diseases of his mind; the shortness of his life; his dread of a future state, with his carelessness to prepare for it: And the wise men of all ages have made the same reflections.

But all these are general calamities, from which none are excepted; and being without remedy, it is vain to bewail them. The great question, long debated in the world, is, whether the rich or the poor are the least miserable of the two? It is certain, that no rich man ever desired to be poor, and that most, if not all, poor men, desire to be rich; whence it may be argued, that, in all appearance, the advantage lieth on the side of wealth, because both parties agree in preferring it before poverty. But this reasoning will be found to be false: For, I lay it down as a certain truth, that God Almighty hath placed all men upon an equal foot, with respect to their happiness in this world, and the capacity of attaining their salvation in the next; or, at least, if there be any difference, it is not to the advantage of the rich and the mighty. Now, since a great part of

those who usually make up our congregations, are not of considerable station, and many among them of the lower sort, and since the meaner people are generally and justly charged with the sin of repining and murmuring at their own condition, to which, however, their betters are sufficiently subject (although, perhaps, for shame, not always so loud in their complaints) I thought it might be useful to reason upon this point in as plain a manner as I can. I shall therefore shew, first, that the poor enjoy many temporal blessings, which are not common to the rich and the great: And, likewise, that the rich and the great are subject to many temporal evils, which are not common to the poor.

But here I would not be misunderstood; perhaps there is not a word more abused than that of the poor, or wherein the world is more generally mistaken. Among the number of those who beg in our streets, or are half-starved at home, or languish in prison for debt, there is hardly one in a hundred who doth not owe his misfortunes to his own laziness, or drunkenness, or worse vices.

To these he owes those very diseases which often disable him from getting his bread. Such wretches are deservedly unhappy: They can only blame themselves; and when we are commanded to have pity on the poor, these are not understood to be of the number.

It is true, indeed, that sometimes honest, endeavouring men are reduced to extreme want, even to the begging of alms, by losses, by accidents, by diseases, and old age, without any fault of their own: But these are very few in comparison of the other; nor would their support be any sensible burthen to the public, if the charity of well-disposed persons were not intercepted by those common strollers, who are most importunate, and who least deserve it. These, indeed, are properly and justly called the poor, whom it should be our study to find out and distinguish, by making them partake of our superfluity and abundance.

But neither have these anything to do with my present subject; For, by the poor, I only intend the honest, industrious artificer, the meaner sort of tradesmen, and the labouring man, who getteth his bread by the sweat of his brows, in town or country, and who make the bulk of mankind among us.

First: I shall therefore shew, first, that the poor (in the sense I understand the word) do enjoy many temporal blessings, which are not common to the rich and great; and likewise, that the rich and great are subject to many temporal evils, which are not common to the poor.

Secondly: From the arguments offered to prove the foregoing head, I shall draw some observations that may be useful for your practice.

I. As to the first: Health, we know, is generally allowed to be the best of all earthly possessions, because it is that, without which we can have no satisfaction in any of the rest. For riches are of no use, if sickness taketh from us the ability of enjoying them, and power and greatness are then only a burthen. Now, if we would look for health, it must be in the humble habitation of the labouring man, or industrious artificer, who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows, and usually live to a good old age, with a great degree of strength and vigour.

The refreshment of the body by sleep is another great happiness of the meaner sort. Their rest is not disturbed by the fear of thieves and robbers, nor is it interrupted by surfeits of intemperance. Labour and plain food supply the want of quieting draughts; and the wise man telleth us, that the sleep of the labouring man is sweet. As to children, which are certainly accounted of as a blessing, even to the poor, where industry is not wanting; they are an assistance to honest parents, instead of being a burthen; they are healthy and strong, and fit for labour; neither is the father in fear, lest his heir should be ruined by an unequal match: Nor is he solicitous about his rising in the world, farther than to be able to get his bread.

The poorer sort are not the objects of general hatred or envy; they have no twinges of ambition, nor trouble themselves with party quarrels, or state divisions. The idle rabble, who follow their ambitious leaders in such cases, do not fall within my description of the poorer sort; for, it is plain, I mean only the the honest industrious poor in town or country, who are safest in times of public disturbance, in perilous seasons, and public revolutions, if they will be quiet, and do their business; for artificers and husbandmen are necessary

in all governments: But in such seasons, the rich are the public mark, because they are oftentimes of no use, but to be plundered; like some sort of birds, who are good for nothing, but their feathers; and so fall a prey to the strongest side.

Let us proceed, on the other side to examine the disadvantages which the rich and the great lie under, with respect to the happiness of the present life.

First, then; While health, as we have said, is the general portion of the lower sort, the gout, the dropsy, the stone, the cholic, and all other diseases, are continually haunting the palaces of the rich and the great, as the natural attendants upon laziness and luxury. Neither does the rich man eat his sumptuous fare with half the appetite and relish, that even the beggars do the crumbs which fall from his table: But, on the contrary, he is full of loathing and disgust, or at best of indifference, in the midst of plenty. Thus their intemperance shortens their lives, without pleasing their appetites.

Business, fear, guilt, design, anguish, and vexation are continually buzzing about the curtains of the rich and the powerful, and will hardly suffer them to close their eyes, unless when they are dosed with the fumes of strong liquors.

It is a great mistake to imagine that the rich want but few things; their wants are more numerous, more craving, and urgent, than those of poorer men: For these endeavour only at the necessaries of life, which make them happy, and they think no farther: But the desire of power and wealth is endless, and therefore impossible to be satisfied with any acquisitions.

If riches were so great a blessing as they are commonly thought, they would at least have this advantage, to give their owners cheerful hearts and countenances; they would often stir them up to express their thankfulness to God, and discover their satisfaction to the world. But, in fact, the contrary to all this is true. For where are there more cloudy brows, more melancholy hearts, or more ingratitude to their great Benefactor, than among those who abound in wealth? And, indeed, it is natural that it should be so, because those men, who covet things that are hard to be got, must be hard to please; whereas a small thing maketh a poor man happy, and great losses cannot befall him.

It is likewise worth considering, how few among the rich have procured their wealth by just measures; how many owe their fortunes to the sins of their parents, how many more to their own? If men's titles were to be tried before a true court of conscience, where false swearing, and a thousand vile artifices, (that are well known, and can hardly be avoided in human courts of justice) would avail nothing; how many would be ejected with infamy and disgrace? How many grow considerable by breach of trust, by bribery and corruption? How many have sold their religion, with the rights and liberties of themselves and others, for power and employments?

And, it is a mistake to think, that the most hardened sinner, who oweth his possessions or titles to any such wicked arts of thieving, can have true peace of mind, under the reproaches of a guilty conscience, and amid the cries of ruined widows and orphans.

I know not one real advantage that the rich have over the poor, except the power of doing good to others. But this is an advantage which God hath not given wicked men the grace to make use of. The wealth acquired by evil means was never employed to good ends; for that would be to divide the kingdom of Satan against itself. Whatever hath been gained by fraud, avarice, oppression, and the like, must be preserved and increased by the same methods.

I shall add but one thing more upon this head, which I hope will convince you, that God (whose thoughts are not as our thoughts) never intended riches or power to be necessary for the happiness of mankind in this life; because it is certain, that there is not one single good quality of the mind absolutely necessary to obtain them, where men are resolved to be rich at any rate; neither honour, justice, temperance, wisdom, religion, truth, or learning; for a slight acquaintance of the world will inform us, that there have been many instances of men, in all ages, who have arrived at great possessions and great dignities, by cunning, fraud, or flattery, without any of these, or any other virtues that can be named. Now, if riches and greatness were such blessings, that good men without them could not have their share of happiness in this life; how cometh it to pass, that God should suffer them to be often dealt to the worst, and most profligate of

mankind; that they should be generally procured by the most abominable means, and applied to the basest and most wicked uses? This ought not to be conceived of a just, a merciful, a wise, and Almighty Being. We must therefore conclude, that wealth and power are in their own nature, at best, but things indifferent, and that a good man may be equally happy without them, provided that he hath a sufficiency of the common blessings of human life to answer all the reasonable and virtuous demands of nature, which his industry will provide, and sobriety will prevent his wanting. Agur's prayer, with the reasons of his wish, are full to this purpose: "Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or, lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

From what hath been said, I shall, in the second place, offer some considerations, that may be useful for your practice.

And here I shall apply myself chiefly to those of the lower sort, for whose comfort and satisfaction this discourse is principally intended. For, having observed the great sin of those, who do not abound in wealth, to be that of murmuring and repining, that God hath dealt his blessings unequally to the sons of men, I thought it would be of great use to remove out of your minds so false and wicked an opinion, by shewing that your condition is really happier than most of you imagine.

First: Therefore, it hath been always agreed in the world, that the present happiness of mankind consisted in the ease of our body and the quiet of our mind; but, from what has been already said, it plainly appears, that neither wealth nor power do in any sort contribute to either of these two blessings. If, on the contrary, by multiplying our desires, they increase our discontents; if they destroy our health, gall us with painful diseases, and shorten our life; if they expose us to hatred, to envy, to censure, to a thousand temptations, it is not easy to see why a wise man should make them his choice, for their own sake, although it were in his power. Would any of you, who are in health and strength of body, with moderate food and raiment earned by your own labour,

rather choose to be in the rich man's bed, under the torture of the gout, unable to take your natural rest, or natural nourishment, with the additional load of a guilty conscience, reproaching you for injustice, oppressions, covetousness, and fraud? No; but you would take the riches and power, and leave behind the inconveniences that attend them; and so would every man living. But that is more than our share, and God never intended this world for such a place of rest as we would make it; for the Scripture assureth us that it was only designed as a place of trial. Nothing is more frequent, than a man to wish himself in another's condition; yet he seldom doth it without some reserve: He would not be so old; he would not be so sickly; he would not be so cruel; he would not be so insolent; he would not be so vicious; he would not be so oppressive, so griping, and so on. From whence it is plain, that, in their own judgment, men are not so unequally dealt with, as they would at first sight imagine: For, if I would not change my condition with another man, without any exception or reservation at all, I am, in reality, more happy than he.

Secondly: You of the meaner sort are subject to fewer temptations than the rich; and therefore your vices are more unpardonable. Labour subdueth your appetites to be satisfied with common things; the business of your several callings filleth up your whole time; so that idleness, which is the bane and destruction of virtue, doth not lead you into the neighbourhood of sin: Your passions are cooler, by not being inflamed with excess, and therefore the gate and the way that lead to life are not so straight and so narrow to you, as to those who live among all the allurements to wickedness. To serve God with the best of your care and understanding, and to be just and true in your dealings, is the short sum of your duty, and will be the more strictly required of you, because nothing lieth in the way to divert you from it.

Thirdly: It is plain from what I have said, that you of the lower rank have no just reason to complain of your condition: Because, as you plainly see, it affordeth you so many advantages, and freeth you from so many vexations, so many distempers both of body and mind, which pursue and torment the rich and powerful.

Fourthly: You are to remember and apply, that the poorest person is not excused from doing good to others, and even relieving the wants of his distressed neighbour, according to his abilities; and if you perform your duty in this point, you far outdo the greatest liberalities of the rich, and will accordingly be accepted of by God, and get your reward: For it is our Saviour's own doctrine, when the widow gave her two mites. The rich give out of their abundance; that is to say, what they give, they do not feel it in their way of living: But the poor man, who giveth out of his little stock, must spare it from the necessary food and raiment of himself and his family. And, therefore, our Saviour adds, "That the widow gave more than all who went before her; for she gave all she had, even all her living;" and so went home utterly unprovided to supply her necessities.

Lastly: As it appeareth from what hath been said, that you in the lower rank have, in reality, a greater share of happiness, your work of salvation is easier, by your being liable to fewer temptations; and as your reward in Heaven is much more certain than it is to the rich, if you seriously perform your duty, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven; so your neglect of it will be less excusable, will meet with fewer allowances from God, and will be punished with double stripes: For the most unknowing among you cannot plead ignorance of what you have been so early taught, I hope, so often instructed in, and which is so easy to be understood, I mean the art of leading a life agreeable to the plain and positive laws of God. Perhaps you may think you lie under one disadvantage, which the great and rich have not; that idleness will certainly reduce you to beggary; whereas those who abound in wealth lie under no necessity either of labour or temperance to keep enough to live on. But this is indeed one part of your happiness, that the lowness of your condition, in a manner, forceth you to what is pleasing to God, and necessary for your daily support. Thus your duty and interest are always the same.

To conclude: Since our blessed Lord, instead of a rich and honourable station in this world, was pleased to choose his lot among men of the lower condition; let not those, on whom the bounty of Providence hath bestowed wealth and honours, despise the men who are placed in a humble and

inferior station; but rather, with their utmost power, by their countenance, by their protection, by just payment of their honest labour, encourage their daily endeavours for the support of themselves and their families. On the other hand, let the poor labour to provide things honest in the sight of all men; and so, with diligence in their several employments, live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world, that they may obtain that glorious reward promised in the Gospel to the poor, I mean the kingdom of Heaven.

Now, to God the Father, &c.

A SERMON ON THE CAUSES OF THE

WRETCHED CONDITION OF IRELAND.[1]

PSALM CXLIV. PART OF THE 14TH AND 15TH VERSES.

"That there be no complaining in our streets. Happy is the people that is in such a case."

IT is a very melancholy reflection, that such a country as ours, which is capable of producing all things necessary, and most things convenient for life, sufficient for the support of four times the number of its inhabitants, should yet lie under the heaviest load of misery and want, our streets crowded with beggars, so many of our lower sort of tradesmen, labourers, and artificers, not able to find clothes and food for their families.

I think it may therefore be of some use to lay before you the chief causes of this wretched condition we are in, and then it will be easier to assign what remedies are in our power toward removing, at least, some part of these evils.

For it is ever to be lamented, that we lie under many disadvantages, not by our own faults, which are peculiar to ourselves, and which no other nation under heaven hath any reason to complain of.

I shall, therefore, first mention some causes of our miseries,

[1] This is not very properly styled a sermon; but, considered as a political dissertation, it has great merit, and it is highly worthy of the subject, and the author. Most of the circumstances here founded upon, as the causes of national distress, are the subject of separate disquisitions in those political writings connected with Ireland. But they are here summed up, and brought into one view; and the opinions expressed form a sort of index to the Dean's tenets upon the state of that country. [S.]

which I doubt are not to be remedied, until God shall put it in the hearts of those who are stronger to allow us the common rights and privileges of brethren, fellow-subjects, and even of mankind.

The first cause of our misery is the intolerable hardships we lie under in every branch of our trade, by which we are become as hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to our rigorous neighbours.

The second cause of our miserable state is the folly, the vanity, and ingratitude of those vast numbers, who think themselves too good to live in the country which gave them birth, and still gives them bread; and rather choose to pass their days, and consume their wealth, and draw out the very vitals of their mother kingdom, among those who heartily despise them.

These I have but lightly touched on, because I fear they are not to be redressed, and, besides, I am very sensible how ready some people are to take offence at the honest truth; and, for that reason, I shall omit several other grievances, under which we are long likely to groan.

I shall therefore go on to relate some other causes of this nation's poverty, by which, if they continue much longer, it must infallibly sink to utter ruin.

The first is, that monstrous pride and vanity in both sexes, especially the weaker sex, who, in the midst of poverty, are suffered to run into all kind of expense and extravagance in dress, and particularly priding themselves to wear nothing but what cometh from abroad, disdaining the growth or manufacture of their own country, in those articles where they can be better served at home with half the expense; and this is grown to such a height, that they will carry the whole yearly rent of a good estate at once on their body. And, as there is in that sex a spirit of envy, by which they cannot endure to see others in a better habit than themselves, so those, whose fortunes can hardly support their families in the necessaries of life, will needs vie with the richest and greatest amongst us, to the ruin of themselves and their posterity.

Neither are the men less guilty of this pernicious folly, who, in imitation of a gaudiness and foppery of dress, introduced of late years into our neighbouring kingdom, (as fools

are apt to imitate only the defects of their betters,) cannot find materials in their own country worthy to adorn their bodies of clay, while their minds are naked of every valuable quality.

Thus our tradesmen and shopkeepers, who deal in home goods, are left in a starving condition, and only those encouraged who ruin the kingdom by importing among us foreign vanities.

Another cause of our low condition is our great luxury, the chief support of which is the materials of it brought to the nation in exchange for the few valuable things left us, whereby so many thousand families want the very necessaries of life.

Thirdly, In most parts of this kingdom the natives are from their infancy so given up to idleness and sloth, that they often choose to beg or steal, rather than support themselves with their own labour; they marry without the least view or thought of being able to make any provision for their families; and whereas, in all industrious nations, children are looked on as a help to their parents; with us, for want of being early trained to work, they are an intolerable burthen at home, and a grievous charge upon the public, as appeareth from the vast number of ragged and naked children in town and country, led about by strolling women, trained up in ignorance and all manner of vice.

Lastly, A great cause of this nation's misery, is that Egyptian bondage of cruel, oppressing, covetous landlords, expecting that all who live under them should make bricks without straw, who grieve and envy when they see a tenant of their own in a whole coat, or able to afford one comfortable meal in a month, by which the spirits of the people are broken, and made for slavery; the farmers and cottagers, almost through the whole kingdom, being to all intents and purposes as real beggars as any of those to whom we give our charity in the streets. And these cruel landlords are every day unpeopling their kingdom, by forbidding their miserable tenants to till the earth, against common reason and justice, and contrary to the practice and prudence of all other nations, by which numberless families have been forced either to leave the kingdom, or stroll about, and increase the number of our thieves and beggars.

Such, and much worse, is our condition at present, if I had leisure or liberty to lay it before you; and, therefore, the next thing which might be considered is, whether there may be any probable remedy found, at the least against some part of these evils; for most of them are wholly desperate.

But this being too large a subject to be now handled, and the intent of my discourse confining me to give some directions concerning the poor of this city, I shall keep myself within those limits. It is indeed in the power of the lawgivers to found a school in every parish of the kingdom, for teaching the meaner and poorer sort of children to speak and read the English tongue, and to provide a reasonable maintenance for the teachers. This would, in time, abolish that part of barbarity and ignorance, for which our natives are so despised by all foreigners: this would bring them to think and act according to the rules of reason, by which a spirit of industry, and thrift, and honesty would be introduced among them. And, indeed, considering how small a tax would suffice for such a work, it is a public scandal that such a thing should never have been endeavoured, or, perhaps, so much as thought on.

To supply the want of such a law, several pious persons, in many parts of this kingdom, have been prevailed on, by the great endeavours and good example set them by the clergy, to erect charity-schools in several parishes, to which very often the richest parishioners contribute the least. In those schools, children are, or ought to be, trained up to read and write, and cast accounts; and these children should, if possible, be of honest parents, gone to decay through age, sickness, or other unavoidable calamity, by the hand of God; not the brood of wicked strollers; for it is by no means reasonable, that the charity of well-inclined people should be applied to encourage the lewdness of those profligate, abandoned women, who crowd our streets with their borrowed or spurious issue.

In those hospitals which have good foundations and rents to support them, whereof, to the scandal of Christianity, there are very few in this kingdom; I say, in such hospitals, the children maintained ought to be only of decayed citizens, and freemen, and be bred up to good trades. But in these

small parish charity-schools which have no support, but the casual goodwill of charitable people, I do altogether disapprove the custom of putting the children 'prentice, except to the very meanest trades; otherwise the poor honest citizen, who is just able to bring up his child, and pay a small sum of money with him to a good master, is wholly defeated, and the bastard issue, perhaps, of some beggar preferred before him. And hence we come to be so overstocked with 'prentices and journeymen, more than our discouraged country can employ; and, I fear, the greatest part of our thieves, pickpockets, and other vagabonds are of this number.

Therefore, in order to make these parish charity-schools of great and universal use, I agree with the opinion of many wise persons, that a new turn should be given to this whole matter.

I think there is no complaint more just than what we find in almost every family, of the folly and ignorance, the fraud and knavery, the idleness and viciousness, the wasteful squandering temper of servants, who are, indeed, become one of the many public grievances of the kingdom; whereof, I believe, there are few masters that now hear me who are not convinced by their own experience. And I am not very confident, that more families, of all degrees, have been ruined by the corruptions of servants, than by all other causes put together. Neither is this to be wondered at, when we consider from what nurseries so many of them are received into our houses. The first is the tribe of wicked boys, wherewith most corners of this town are pestered, who haunt public doors. These, having been born of beggars, and bred to pilfer as soon as they can go or speak, as years come on, are employed in the lowest offices to get themselves bread, are practised in all manner of villainy, and when they are grown up, if they are not entertained in a gang of thieves, are forced to seek for a service. The other nursery is the barbarous and desert part of the country, from whence such lads come up hither to seek their fortunes, who are bred up from the dunghill in idleness, ignorance, lying, and thieving. From these two nurseries, I say, a great number of our servants come to us, sufficient to corrupt all the rest. Thus, the whole race of servants in this kingdom have gotten so ill

a reputation, that some persons from England, come over hither into great stations, are said to have absolutely refused admitting any servant born among us into their families. Neither can they be justly blamed; for although it is not impossible to find an honest native fit for a good service, yet the inquiry is too troublesome, and the hazard too great for a stranger to attempt.

If we consider the many misfortunes that befall private families, it will be found that servants are the causes and instruments of them all: Are our goods embezzled, wasted and destroyed? Is our house burnt down to the ground? It is by the sloth, the drunkenness or the villainy of servants. Are we robbed and murdered in our beds? It is by confederacy with our servants. Are we engaged in quarrels and misunderstandings with our neighbours? These were all begun and inflamed by the false, malicious tongues of our servants. Are the secrets of our families betrayed, and evil repute spread of us? Our servants were the authors. Do false accusers rise up against us (an evil too frequent in this country)? They have been tampering with our servants. Do our children discover folly, malice, pride, cruelty, revenge, undutifulness in their words and actions? Are they seduced to lewdness or scandalous marriages? It is all by our servants. Nay, the very mistakes, follies, blunders, and absurdities of those in our service, are able to ruffle and discompose the mildest nature, and are often of such consequence, as to put whole families into confusion.

Since therefore not only our domestic peace and quiet, and the welfare of our children, but even the very safety of our lives, reputations, and fortunes have so great a dependence upon the choice of our servants, I think it would well become the wisdom of the nation to make some provision in so important an affair. But in the meantime, and, perhaps, to better purpose, it were to be wished, that the children of both sexes, entertained in the parish charity-schools, were bred up in such a manner as would give them a teachable disposition, and qualify them to learn whatever is required in any sort of service. For instance, they should be taught to read and write, to know somewhat in casting accounts, to understand the principles of religion, to practise cleanliness, to get a spirit of honesty, industry, and thrift,

and be severely punished for every neglect in any of these particulars. For, it is the misfortune of mankind, that if they are not used to be taught in their early childhood, whereby to acquire what I call a teachable disposition, they cannot, without great difficulty, learn the easiest thing in the course of their lives, but are always awkward and unhandy; their minds, as well as bodies, for want of early practice, growing stiff and unmanageable, as we observe in the sort of gentlemen, who, kept from school by the indulgence of their parents but a few years, are never able to recover the time they have lost, and grow up in ignorance and all manner of vice, whereof we have too many examples all over the nation. But to return to what I was saying: If these charity children were trained up in the manner I mentioned, and then bound apprentices in the families of gentlemen and citizens, (for which a late law giveth great encouragement) being accustomed from their first entrance to be always learning some useful thing, [they] would learn, in a month, more than another, without those advantages, can do in a year; and, in the meantime, be very useful in a family, as far as their age and strength would allow. And when such children come to years of discretion, they will probably be a useful example to their fellow-servants, at least they will prove a strong check upon the rest; for, I suppose, everybody will allow, that one good, honest, diligent servant in a house may prevent abundance of mischief in the family.

These are the reasons for which I urge this matter so strongly, and I hope those who listen to me will consider them.

I shall now say something about that great number of poor, who, under the name of common beggars, infest our streets, and fill our ears with their continual cries, and craving importunity. This I shall venture to call an unnecessary evil, brought upon us for the gross neglect, and want of proper management, in those whose duty it is to prevent it. But before I proceed farther, let me humbly presume to vindicate the justice and mercy of God and His dealings with mankind. Upon this particular He hath not dealt so hardly with His creatures as some would imagine, when they see so many miserable objects ready to perish for want: For it would infallibly be found, upon strict

enquiry, that there is hardly one in twenty of those miserable objects who do not owe their present poverty to their own faults, to their present sloth and negligence, to their indiscreet marriage without the least prospect of supporting a family, to their foolish expensiveness, to their drunkenness, and other vices, by which they have squandered their gettings, and contracted diseases in their old age. And, to speak freely, is it any way reasonable or just, that those who have denied themselves many lawful satisfactions and conveniences of life, from a principle of conscience, as well as prudence, that they might not be a burthen to the public, should be charged with supporting others, who have brought themselves to less than a morsel of bread by their idleness, extravagance, and vice? Yet such, and no other, are far the greatest number not only in those who beg in our streets, but even of what we call poor decayed housekeepers, whom we are apt to pity as real objects of charity, and distinguish them from common beggars, although, in truth, they both owe their undoing to the same causes; only the former is either too nicely bred to endure walking half naked in the streets, or too proud to own their wants. For the artificer or other tradesman, who pleadeth he is grown too old to work or look after business, and therefore expecteth assistance as a decayed housekeeper; may we not ask him, why he did not take care, in his youth and strength of days, to make some provision against old age, when he saw so many examples before him of people undone by their idleness and vicious extravagance? And to go a little higher; whence cometh it that so many citizens and shopkeepers, of the most creditable trade, who once made a good figure, go to decay by their expensive pride and vanity, affecting to educate and dress their children above their abilities, or the state of life they ought to expect?

However, since the best of us have too many infirmities to answer for, we ought not to be severe upon those of others; and therefore if our brother, through grief, or sickness, or other incapacity, is not in a condition to preserve his being, we ought to support him to the best of our power, without reflecting over seriously on the causes that brought him to his misery. But in order to this, and to turn our charity into its proper channel, we ought to consider who

and where those objects are, whom it is chiefly incumbent upon us to support.

By the ancient law of this realm, still in force, every parish is obliged to maintain its own poor, which although some may think to be not very equal, because many parishes are very rich, and have few poor among them, and others the contrary; yet, I think, may be justly defended: For as to remote country parishes in the desert part of the kingdom, the necessaries of life are there so cheap, that the infirm poor may be provided for with little burden to the inhabitants. But in what I am going to say, I shall confine myself only to this city, where we are overrun not only with our own poor, but with a far greater number from every part of the nation. Now, I say, this evil of being encumbered with so many foreign beggars, who have not the least title to our charity, and whom it is impossible for us to support, may be easily remedied, if the government of this city, in conjunction with the clergy and parish officers, would think it worth their care; and I am sure few things deserve it better. For, if every parish would take a list of those begging poor which properly belong to it, and compel each of them to wear a badge, marked and numbered, so as to be seen and known by all they meet, and confine them to beg within the limits of their own parish, severely punishing them when they offend, and driving out all interlopers from other parishes, we could then make a computation of their numbers; and the strollers from the country being driven away, the remainder would not be too many for the charity of those who pass by to maintain; neither would any beggar, although confined to his own parish, be hindered from receiving the charity of the whole town; because, in this case, those well-disposed persons who walk the streets will give their charity to such whom they think proper objects, wherever they meet them, provided they are found in their own parishes, and wearing their badges of distinction. And, as to those parishes which bordered upon the skirts and suburbs of the town, where country strollers are used to harbour themselves, they must be forced to go back to their homes, when they find nobody to relieve them, because they want that mark which only gives them licence to beg. Upon this point, it were to be wished, that inferior parish officers had better

encouragement given them to perform their duty in driving away all beggars who do not belong to the parish, instead of conniving at them, as it is said they do for some small contribution: For the whole city would save much more by ridding themselves of many hundred beggars, than they would lose by giving parish officers a reasonable support.

It should seem a strange, unaccountable thing, that those who have probably been reduced to want by riot, lewdness, and idleness, although they have assurance enough to beg alms publicly from all they meet, should yet be too proud to wear the parish badge, which would turn so much to their own advantage, by ridding them of such great numbers, who now intercept the greatest part of what belongeth to them: Yet it is certain, that there are very many who publicly declare they will never wear those badges, and many others who either hide or throw them away: But the remedy for this is very short, easy, and just, by trying them like vagabonds and sturdy beggars, and forcibly driving them out of the town.

Therefore, as soon as this expedient of wearing badges shall be put in practice, I do earnestly exhort all those who hear me, never to give their alms to any public beggar who doth not fully comply with this order, by which our number of poor will be so reduced, that it will be much easier to provide for the rest. Our shop-doors will be no longer crowded with so many thieves and pickpockets, in beggars' habits, nor our streets so dangerous to those who are forced to walk in the night.

Thus I have, with great freedom, delivered my thoughts upon this subject, which so nearly concerneth us. It is certainly a bad scheme, to any Christian country, which God hath blessed with fruitfulness, and where the people enjoy the just rights and privileges of mankind, that there should be any beggars at all. But, alas! among us, where the whole nation itself is almost reduced to beggary by the disadvantages we lie under, and the hardships we are forced to bear; the laziness, ignorance, thoughtlessness, squandering temper, slavish nature, and uncleanly manner of living in the poor Popish natives, together with the cruel oppressions of their landlords, who delight to see their vassals in the dust; I say, that, in such a nation, how can we otherwise

expect than to be over-run with objects of misery and want? Therefore, there can be no other method to free this city from so intolerable a grievance, than by endeavouring, as far as in us lies, that the burthen may be more equally divided, by contributing to maintain our own poor, and forcing the strollers and vagabonds to return to their several homes in the country, there to smite the conscience of those oppressors, who first stripped them of all their substance.

I might here, if the time would permit, offer many arguments to persuade to works of charity; but you hear them so often from the pulpit, that I am willing to hope you may not now want them. Besides, my present design was only to shew where your alms would be best bestowed, to the honour of God, your own ease and advantage, the service of your country, and the benefit of the poor. I desire you will all weigh and consider what I have spoken, and, according to your several stations and abilities, endeavour to put it in practice; and God give you good success. To Whom, with the Son and Holy Ghost, be all honour, &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

A SERMON UPON

SLEEPING IN CHURCH.

ACTS, CHAP. XX. VER. 9.

"And there sat in a window a certain young man, named *Eutychus*, being fallen into a deep sleep; and as *Paul* was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead."

I HAVE chosen these words with design, if possible, to disturb some part in this audience of half an hour's sleep, for the convenience and exercise whereof this place, at this season of the day, is very much celebrated.

There is indeed one mortal disadvantage to which all preaching is subject; that those who, by the wickedness of their lives, stand in greatest need, have usually the smallest share; for either they are absent upon the account of idleness, or spleen, or hatred to religion, or in order to doze away the intemperance of the week; or, if they do come, they are sure to employ their minds rather any other way, than regarding or attending to the business of the place.

The accident which happened to this young man in the text, hath not been sufficient to discourage his successors: But because the preachers now in the world, however they may exceed St Paul in the art of setting men to sleep, do extremely fall short of him in the working of miracles; therefore men are become so cautious as to choose more safe and convenient stations and postures for taking their repose, without hazard of their persons; and, upon the whole matter, choose rather to trust their destruction to a miracle, than their safety. However, this being not the only way by which the lukewarm Christians and scorners of

the age discover their neglect and contempt of preaching, I shall enter expressly into consideration of this matter, and order my discourse in the following method:

First: I shall produce several instances to shew the great neglect of preaching now amongst us.
Secondly: I shall reckon up some of the usual quarrels men have against preaching.
Thirdly: I shall set forth the great evil of this neglect and contempt of preaching, and discover the real causes from whence it proceedeth.
Lastly: I shall offer some remedies against this great and spreading evil.

First: I shall produce certain instances to shew the great neglect of preaching now among us.

These may be reduced under two heads. First, men's absence from the service of the Church; and secondly, their misbehaviour when they are here.

The first instance of men's neglect, is in their frequent absence from the church.

There is no excuse so trivial, that will not pass upon some men's consciences to excuse their attendance at the public worship of God. Some are so unfortunate as to be always indisposed on the Lord's day, and think nothing so unwholesome as the air of a church. Others have their affairs so oddly contrived, as to be always unluckily prevented by business. With some it is a great mark of wit, and deep understanding, to stay at home on Sundays. Others again discover strange fits of laziness, that seize them, particularly on that day, and confine them to their beds. Others are absent out of mere contempt of religion. And, lastly, there are not a few who look upon it as a day of rest, and therefore claim the privilege of their cattle, to keep the Sabbath by eating, drinking, and sleeping, after the toil and labour of the week. Now in all this the worst circumstance is, that these persons are such whose companies are most required, and who stand most in need of a physician.

Secondly: Men's great neglect and contempt of preaching, appear by their misbehaviour when at church.

If the audience were to be ranked under several heads, according to their behaviour, when the word of God is delivered, how small a number would appear of those who receive it as they ought? How much of the seed then sown would be found to fall by the way-side, upon stony ground or among thorns? And how little good ground would there be to take it? A preacher cannot look round from the pulpit, without observing, that some are in a perpetual whisper, and, by their air and gesture, give occasion to suspect, that they are in those very minutes defaming their neighbour. Others have their eyes and imagination constantly engaged in such a circle of objects, perhaps to gratify the most unwarrantable desires, that they never once attend to the business of the place; the sound of the preacher's words doth not so much as once interrupt them. Some have their minds wandering among idle, worldly, or vicious thoughts. Some lie at catch to ridicule whatever they hear, and with much wit and humour provide a stock of laughter, by furnishing themselves from the pulpit. But, of all misbehaviour, none is comparable to that of those who come here to sleep; opium is not so stupefying to many persons as an afternoon sermon. Perpetual custom hath so brought it about, that the words, of whatever preacher, become only a sort of uniform sound at a distance, than which nothing is more effectual to lull the senses. For, that it is the very sound of the sermon which bindeth up their faculties, is manifest from hence, because they all awake so very regularly as soon as it ceaseth, and with much devotion receive the blessing, dozed and besotted with indecencies I am ashamed to repeat.

I proceed, *Secondly*, to reckon up some of the usual quarrels men have against preaching, and to shew the unreasonableness of them.

Such unwarrantable demeanour as I have described, among Christians, in the house of God, in a solemn assembly, while their faith and duty are explained and delivered, have put those who are guilty upon inventing some excuses to extenuate their fault: This they do by turning the blame either upon the particular preacher, or upon preaching in general. First, they object against the par-

ticular preacher; his manner, his delivery, his voice are disagreeable, his style and expression are flat and low; sometimes improper and absurd; the matter is heavy, trivial and insipid; sometimes despicable, and perfectly ridiculous; or else, on the other side, he runs up into unintelligible speculation, empty notions, and abstracted flights, all clad in words above usual understandings.

Secondly, They object against preaching in general; it is a perfect road of talk; they know already whatever can be said; they have heard the same an hundred times over. They quarrel that preachers do not relieve an old beaten subject with wit and invention; and that now the art is lost of moving men's passions, so common among the ancient orators of Greece and Rome. These, and the like objections, are frequently in the mouths of men who despise the "foolishness of preaching." But let us examine the reasonableness of them.

The doctrine delivered by all preachers is the same: "So we preach, and so ye believe:" But the manner of deliver ing is suited to the skill and abilities of each, which differ in preachers just as in the rest of mankind. However, in personal dislikes of a particular preacher, are these men sure they are always in the right? Do they consider how mixed a thing is every audience, whose taste and judgment differ, perhaps, every day, not only from each other, but themselves? And how to calculate a discourse, that shall exactly suit them all, is beyond the force and reach of human reason, knowledge, or invention. Wit and eloquence are shining qualities, that God hath imparted, in great degrees, to very few, nor any more to be expected, in the generality of any rank among men, than riches and honour. But further: If preaching in general be all old and beaten, and that they are already so well acquainted with it, more shame and guilt to them who so little edify by it. But these men, whose ears are so delicate as not to endure a plain discourse of religion, who expect a constant supply of wit and eloquence on a subject handled so many thousand times; what will they say when we turn the objection upon themselves, who, with all the rude and profane liberty of discourse they take, upon so many thousand subjects, are so dull as to furnish nothing but tedious repetitions, and little

paltry, nauseous common-places, so vulgar, so worn, or so obvious, as, upon any other occasion, but that of advancing vice, would be hooted off the stage? Nor, lastly, are preachers justly blamed for neglecting human oratory to move the passions, which is not the business of a Christian orator, whose office it is only to work upon faith and reason. All other eloquence hath been a perfect cheat, to stir up men's passions against truth and justice, for the service of a faction, to put false colours upon things, and by an amusement of agreeable words, make the worse reason appear to be the better. This is certainly not to be allowed in Christian eloquence, and, therefore, St Paul took quite the other course; he "came not with excellency of words, or enticing speech of men's wisdom, but in plain evidence of the Spirit and power." And perhaps it was for that reason the young man Eutychus, used to the Grecian eloquence, grew tired and fell so fast asleep.

I go on, *Thirdly*, to set forth the great evil of this neglect and scorn of preaching, and to discover the real causes from whence it proceedeth.

I think it is obvious,[1] that this neglect of preaching hath very much occasioned the great decay of religion among us. To this may be imputed no small part of that contempt some men bestow on the clergy; for, whoever talketh without being regarded, is sure to be despised. To this we owe, in a great measure, the spreading of atheism and infidelity among us; for religion, like all other things, is soonest put out of countenance by being ridiculed. The scorn of preaching might perhaps have been at first introduced by men of nice ears and refined taste; but it is now become a spreading evil, through all degrees, and both sexes; for, since sleeping, talking, and laughing are qualities sufficient to furnish out a critic, the meanest and most ignorant have set up a title, and succeeded in it as well as their betters. Thus are the last efforts of reforming mankind rendered wholly useless: "How shall they hear," saith the apostle, "without a preacher?" But, if they have a preacher, and make it a point of wit or breeding not to hear him, what remedy is

[1] Hawkesworth (Swift's "Works," vol. xiii., 1762) inserts here "to believe." [T. S.]

left? To this neglect of preaching, we may also entirely impute that gross ignorance among us in the very principles of religion, which it is amazing to find in persons who very much value their own knowledge and understanding in other things; yet, it is a visible, inexcusable ignorance, even in the meanest among us, considering the many advantages they have of learning their duty. And it hath been the great encouragement to all manner of vice: For, in vain we preach down sin to a people, "whose hearts are waxed gross, whose ears are dull of hearing, and whose eyes are closed." Therefore Christ Himself, in His discourses, frequently rouseth up the attention of the multitude, and of His disciples themselves, with this expression, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." But, among all neglects of preaching, none is so fatal as that of sleeping in the house of God; a scorner may listen to truth and reason, and in time grow serious; an unbeliever may feel the pangs of a guilty conscience; one whose thoughts or eyes wander among other objects, may, by a lucky word, be called back to attention: But the sleeper shuts up all avenues to his soul: He is "like the deaf adder, that hearkeneth not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." And, we may preach with as good success to the grave that is under his feet.

But the great evil of this neglect will further yet appear, from considering the real causes whence it proceedeth; whereof the first, I take to be, an evil conscience. Many men come to church to save or gain a reputation; or because they will not be singular, but comply with an established custom; yet, all the while, they are loaded with the guilt of old rooted sins. These men can expect to hear of nothing but terrors and threatenings, their sins laid open in true colours, and eternal misery the reward of them; therefore, no wonder they stop their ears, and divert their thoughts, and seek any amusement rather than stir the hell within them.

Another cause of this neglect is, a heart set upon worldly things. Men whose minds are much enslaved to earthly affairs all the week, cannot disengage or break the chain of their thoughts so suddenly, as to apply to a discourse that is wholly foreign to what they have most at heart. Tell a usurer of charity, and mercy, and restitution, you talk to the

deaf; his heart and soul, with all his senses, are got among his bags, or he is gravely asleep, and dreaming of a mortgage. Tell a man of business, that the cares of the world choke the good seed; that we must not encumber ourselves with much serving; that the salvation of his soul is the one thing necessary: You see, indeed, the shape of a man before you, but his faculties are all gone off among clients and papers, thinking how to defend a bad cause, or find flaws in a good one; or, he weareth out the time in drowsy nods.

A third cause of the great neglect and scorn of preaching, ariseth from the practice of men who set up to decry and disparage religion; these, being zealous to promote infidelity and vice, learn a rote of buffoonery that serveth all occasions, and refutes the strongest arguments for piety and good manners. These have a set of ridicule calculated for all sermons, and all preachers, and can be extreme witty as often as they please upon the same fund.

Let me now, in the last place, offer some remedies against this great evil.

It will be one remedy against the contempt of preaching, rightly to consider the end for which it was designed. There are many who place abundance of merit in going to church, although it be with no other prospect but that of being well entertained, wherein if they happen to fail, they return wholly disappointed. Hence it is become an impertinent vein among people of all sorts to hunt after what they call a good sermon, as if it were a matter of pastime and diversion. Our business, alas! is quite another thing, either to learn, or, at least, be reminded of our duty, to apply the doctrines delivered, compare the rules we hear with our lives and actions, and find wherein we have transgressed. These are the dispositions men should bring into the house of God, and then they will be little concerned about the preacher's wit or eloquence, nor be curious to enquire out his faults and infirmities, but consider how to correct their own.

Another remedy against the contempt of preaching, is, that men would consider, whether it be not reasonable to give more allowances for the different abilities of preachers than they usually do; refinements of style, and flights of wit,

as they are not properly the business of any preacher, so they cannot possibly be the talents of all. In most other discourses, men are satisfied with sober sense and plain reason; and, as understandings usually go, even that is not over frequent. Then why they should be so over nice in expectation of eloquence,[1] where it is neither necessary nor convenient, is hard to imagine.

Lastly: The scorners of preaching would do well to consider, that this talent of ridicule, they value so much, is a perfection very easily acquired, and applied to all things whatsoever; neither is anything at all the worse, because it is capable of being perverted to burlesque: Perhaps it may be the more perfect upon that score; since we know, the most celebrated pieces have been thus treated with greatest success. It is in any man's power to suppose a fool's cap on the wisest head, and then laugh at his own supposition. I think there are not many things cheaper than supposing and laughing; and if the uniting these two talents can bring a thing into contempt, it is hard to know where it may end.

To conclude: These considerations may, perhaps, have some effect while men are awake; but what arguments shall we use to the sleeper? What methods shall we take to hold open his eyes? Will he be moved by considerations of common civility? We know it is reckoned a point of very bad manners to sleep in private company, when, perhaps, the tedious impertinence of many talkers would render it at least as excusable as at the dullest sermon. Do they think it a small thing to watch four hours at a play, where all virtue and religion are openly reviled; and can they not watch one half hour to hear them defended? Is this to deal like a judge, (I mean like a good judge) to listen on one side of the cause, and sleep on the other? I shall add but one word more: That this indecent sloth is very much owing to that luxury and excess men usually practise upon this day, by which half the service thereof is turned to sin; men dividing the time between God and their bellies, when after a gluttonous meal, their senses dozed and stupefied,

[1] Hawkesworth (1762 edit.) has "over nice and expecting for sense"; but both the 4to and the 8vo of 1764 agree with Scott as above. [T. S.]

they retire to God's house to sleep out the afternoon. Surely, brethren, these things ought not so to be.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." And God give us all grace to hear and receive His holy word to the salvation of our own souls.